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VASARI'S LIVES.

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VASARI'S LIVES OF ITALIAN  
PAINTERS. SELECTED AND  
PREFACED BY HAVELOCK ELLIS.

LONDON: WALTER SCOTT, LTD.  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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## PREFACE.



IF we take a bird's-eye view of European painting we find that it falls into two groups or masses. The earliest to appear is in the south, and corresponds, not perhaps accidentally, to ancient Etruria; its centre is Florence. The other is in the north; it radiates chiefly from Flanders and Holland, extending to France, more especially to Scandinavian France in Normandy, and to Teutonic districts such as the more Scandinavian parts of Great Britain. Outside these two large masses there is, indeed, one other group, of the first magnitude because it includes Velasquez, which is apparently unconnected with either of the great main groups. But while the Spanish school apparently stands apart, influenced from the south, and having as well characteristics that are all its own, it is really closely allied in essential spirit and method to the great northern mass. Velasquez might have been brother to Rembrandt; he could scarcely have been akin to Raphael. To look at the map in this way is, of course, to confine ourselves to modern painting; we know nothing of Greek classic painting save from its last delicious reflections, rescued from Pompeii to adorn the wonderful museum at Naples, and so impressive because of the wonderful art impulse behind them, which they seem to hint at, without fully

revealing. That impulse has long been extinct; no great painting, no great art of design in any kind, has come from Grecian Italy, from Rome to Naples, since the irruption of Christianity. In modern Europe we see only these two great northern and southern centres of painting.

The characteristics of these two groups are widely different. The southern men looked at life like children. Their æsthetic tastes, one might say, were fundamentally those of the Bower birds of Australia; they gathered together all the pretty things they could see and wove them into harmonious pictures. At the highest point they present to us a charming unreal phantasmagoria, a sort of Italian opera in fresco. Those persons who in music are chiefly attracted to Rossini or Donizetti or Bellini or Verdi, will in painting be chiefly attracted to Gozzoli or Botticelli or Raphael or Andrea del Sarto. In the historical development of each group there is a progressive toning down of the pretty miscellaneous details, as we reach Raphael, just as when we reach Verdi, but the general tone and temper throughout remain the same. There are exceptions; Leonardo, for instance, one of the very greatest artists of all time, possessed the most accomplished, the most searching intellect that has ever been directed to painting; and I need scarcely point out that I am not here concerned with the sculptors. Again, the Venetians stand apart; spiritually as well as historically, Venetian art is a glorious expansion of Flemish art; the fine flower of Venice sprang from roots at Bruges. But, on the whole, Florentine art—taking the word in the vaguest and widest sense—was unconscious of any heroic problems in art, not even urgent to gain self-expression, but well pleased with the conventionalism of facile realisms and equally facile idealisms. With glad heart and inexhaustible play of fancy the Florentine artist pro-



duced his delicious extravaganzas, made up of soaring madonnas, pretty flowers, aureoled saints, luscious fruits, elaborate upholstery and raiment. All very childlike, perhaps, but these children were children of genius, and the time will never come when their work ceases to be delightful.

The northern group began to develop earlier, but it developed more slowly, and is still alive to-day. It differs fundamentally from the other school, at the outset and all through, by being naturalistic. The Italians reached naturalism with Raphael and Andrea del Sarto, but it was for the most part a flaccid easy-going naturalism that sank at once and for ever into the flattest of painted twaddle. It seems as if these Etruscan Italians found it impossible to take the natural world seriously unless they mixed it up with the supernatural world, so that when their supernatural world had gone they lost everything that made art worthy of high aim. The northern men were natural from the first and serious from the first. Even their earliest work scarcely impresses us as infantine. And the masterpiece of the Van Eycks—the Adoration of the Lamb at Ghent and Brussels—shows a searching directness and realism which only belongs to an art that is mature and, in the eternal sense, modern. Undoubtedly this result is not solely due to difference of racial temperament; the northern men had no temptation to cover vast sunny expanses of wall; they were forced to concentrate themselves. But the fact remains that they took life seriously and realistically, not caring for visions, or for the collection of pretty things just because they were pretty or because they were there. They strove to express ever more perfectly the shape and colour and texture of things, and the mystery of light and the gloom of shadow, and the ever-varying life of the earth that at no

two moments is the same. No artists have got closer to the very fibre of nature, its microscopic texture, or its subtle atmosphere; and in their research for truth they made the marvellous discovery that the object may be brought nearer by being thrown back, that by letting go the details it was possible to catch more perfectly at the whole. Time has justified the fundamental rightness of that art-instinct which began to grow so far back in the Rhine valley. The Florentine school died out long ago in sugary insipidities, but the northern school is still alive at Paris and wherever the influence of Paris extends, and we may count on the fingers of one hand the great artists of to-day who are outside its influence.

To appreciate one sort of beauty we need not revile another sort. I do not wish to belittle the art of Florence. So far as deep-rooted personal instincts go, I am frankly on the side of the Dutchmen and the Spaniards. I would rather live in a tavern with Hals and Steen, or in a spinning-shop with Velasquez, than go to heaven with Angelico or to hell with Michelangelo. One may waver, entering San Marco at Florence, as one falls beneath the influence of the sweet dreams that seem to float on the walls of its cells; or as one cranes up his neck to divine, amid the harsh faded blues and greens, the stupendous visions flung on to the roof of the Cappella Sistina. But one regains one's balance afterwards. It was a fine instance of the sanity of Goethe's art-instincts that notwithstanding his own enthusiasm for Italy, and the enthusiasm for Italian art which existed in his day, he declared distinctly in mature age his preference for the art of the Dutchmen. To feel this is to be true to the instincts of one's race. A racial preference of this kind does not make one blind to the facile delights of Italian painting, to the caprice and variety of its manifestations, to the extreme

interest of the circumstances which enabled the Etruscan spirit to develop harmoniously down to the dregs. One may feel more at home at Bruges and Venice and Amsterdam and Madrid and Paris, but the delicious exotic art of Florence must still exert its charm on us. We do it no injustice by subordinating it; the marvel is that so small a tract of country should ever have blossomed so luxuriantly into art which for a long period held its own against the world.

Not the least felicity of the Florentines was the chance that gave them an admirable biographer, the Boswell of a whole tribe. The Dutchmen had a chronicler in Carl van Mander, but a chronicler of the baldest sort, who tells us little indeed that we care to know. Vasari came at the right time; he was old enough to know as many of the great Florentines as one man could know, and young enough not to have missed one who was worth knowing. His admiration for the great men he had known was boundless, but he himself as a painter was not of them; he belonged to the coming age of decadence, so that the satisfaction with which we read his *Lives* is unalloyed by any regret for the time they lost to his art. Bórn at Arezzo in 1511 and dying in 1574, a pupil of Andrea del Sarto, a pupil, too, of Michelangelo, for whom his admiration was boundless, he himself lived in an age of artistic decay, and he belonged to his age. He worked with industrious facility, anywhere and for any one; and he was proud of his facility, of his respectability, of his deference to the great of the earth. To-day we turn away from his work with pleasure when we meet it at Florence or elsewhere. He was an eminently respectable, commonplace artist, and while such fare well in this present life, in the life beyond life they receive everlasting damnation. Vasari's moral character was clearly excellent; he



was an honest and upright man, holding a modest *bourgeois* ideal of life ever before his eyes. I refer to this characteristic because it is brought very clearly before us in his *Lives*. His sympathies are always on the side of the angels. He is more than just to a friend, like Michelangelo, he is scarcely unfair even to an enemy, like Cellini; but while he is tolerant of harmless eccentricity, as in Piero di Cosimo, he is sometimes unjust when he detects moral laxity, as in Il Sodoma. As an artist and as a man Vasari was a respectable but rather commonplace character. As a writer he still exhibits something of the same character. But here he frequently rises above the commonplace. On the whole his is a good style, without research, somewhat careless perhaps, flexible and easy, conversational or rhetorical, at times piquant, following his moods.<sup>1</sup>

There are two ways of approaching Vasari's *Lives*. We

<sup>1</sup> I am a little doubtful whether the reader of the present volume will accept this statement. Unfortunately I have had to use a very unsatisfactory translation, that of Mrs. Foster in Bohn's Series. It is a diffuse and long-winded translation, almost a paraphrase sometimes. Mrs. Foster constantly throws in additional clauses, and Vasari's single adjectives are tripled, so that by chance one rendering may hit the mark. She seems to have sought to use as many words and as long words as possible, and succeeds in producing certain ponderously pompous effects of the "verily and forsooth" order. But that is not the kind of effect Vasari produces in the original. Moreover, Vasari—the decorous, respectable Vasari—is here and there not quite sufficiently decorous for Mrs. Foster, and must be toned down; even the incidental mention of a flea has to be introduced by a footnote of apology, breaking the shock to the genteel reader's nerves. I have cleared away much of Mrs. Foster's superfluity of verbal naughtiness, and have brought many of the more important passages nearer to Vasari's simpler and more vivid original. Still the translation here given is in the main Mrs. Foster's. The time has fully come for a new English translation of Vasari.

may go to them for such knowledge as they afford concerning the history of art and the cataloguing of the art-products of the Italian Renaissance ; it is from this point of view that Vasari is usually approached, and here he is of undoubted value, although, as he is very frequently inaccurate, his statements must always be critically examined. We may, again, come to Vasari for the light which he throws on the psychology of genius in artists. From this point of view Vasari is incomparable. He was the personal friend or acquaintance of some of the world's greatest artists ; he moved in an atmosphere of artistic tradition which he has fully recorded. It is solely from this point of view that the reader will approach Vasari in the present volume. I have sought to gather together from the voluminous *Lives* everything that is really of value regarding the intimate nature and habits of the great Florentine artists of the Italian Renaissance. Vasari is inaccurate undoubtedly,<sup>1</sup> but from this point of view even his inaccuracies, unlike those of the modern journalist, are helpful to us, for he knew the men, he lived and moved among their fellow-townsmen, he was the pupil or the pupil's pupil of some of them, and even if every anecdote he tells us is not demonstrably true we may usually be sure that it is *ben trovato*, that it crystallises some trait of the man as he was known to his fellows, and is therefore profitable to edification. It is only of recent years that it has been possible to approach Vasari's *Lives* from this point of view, because it is only recently that any attempt has been made to determine precisely the artist's psychological characters. Even at the present time there is only one book of any value, so far as I am aware, dealing with

<sup>1</sup> His inaccuracy may be judged from the frequency with which his dates differ from those given in the headings to the *Lives* in the present edition, the latter representing the results of accurate modern research.

the matter, that by Lucien Arréat,<sup>1</sup> though we must not forget the very valuable and detailed studies which are being carried on by Binet, and which have in part appeared from time to time in the *Revue Philosophique* and elsewhere. We cannot expect Vasari to satisfy the precise demands of the modern analytic spirit, but, on the other hand, he characterises the men he knew with a picturesque synthetic frankness which we, with our over-strained sensitiveness concerning the possible objections of our subject's nieces and cousins, cannot venture to apply. It is an error that will avenge itself. We may be very sure that posterity will kick over contemptuously the painted wooden dolls set up by the piety of latter-day biographers. But it will always come back, lovingly and reverently, to Vasari. Their frescoes are fading, already not a line or a tone remains to bear witness to the skill of some of these men, but as personalities—immortal types of the artistic temperament in all its moods—they will always be alive in Vasari's pages.

H. E.

<sup>1</sup> *Psychologie du Peintre*, Paris, 1892.

VASARI'S LIVES.





# VASARI'S LIVES.

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## CIMABUE.

[BORN 1240—DIED 1302.]

GIOVANNI CIMABUE, of the noble family of that name, was born in the city of Florence. The youth, as he grew up, being considered by his father and others to give proof of an acute judgment and a clear understanding, was sent to Santa Maria Novella to study letters under a relation, who was then master in grammar to the novices of that convent. But Cimabue, instead of devoting himself to letters, consumed the whole day in drawing men, horses, houses, and other various fancies, on his books and different papers—an occupation to which he felt himself impelled by nature; and this natural inclination was favoured by fortune, for the governors of the city had invited certain Greek painters to Florence, for the purpose of restoring the art of painting, which had not merely degenerated, but was altogether lost. These artists, among other works, began to paint the chapel of the Gondi, situate next the principal chapel, in Santa Maria Novella, the roof and walls of which are now almost entirely destroyed by time, and Cimabue, often escaping from the school, and having already made a commencement in the art he was so fond of, would stand watching those masters at their work the day through. Judging from these circumstances, his father, as well as the artists themselves, concluded

him to be well endowed for painting, and thought that much might be hoped from his future efforts, if he were devoted to that art. Giovanni was accordingly, to his no small satisfaction, placed with those masters. From this time he laboured incessantly, and was so far aided by his natural powers that he soon greatly surpassed his teachers both in design and colouring. For these masters, caring little for the progress of art, had executed their works as we now see them, not in the excellent manner of the ancient Greeks, but in the rude modern style of their own day. Wherefore, though Cimabue imitated his Greek instructors, he very much improved the art, relieving it greatly from their uncouth manner, and doing honour to his country by the name that he acquired, and by the works which he performed. He painted the picture of the Virgin, for the church of Santa Maria Novella, where it is suspended on high, between the chapel of the Rucellai family and that of the Bardi, of Vernio. This picture is of larger size than any figure that had been painted down to those times; and the angels surrounding it make it evident that, although Cimabue still retained the Greek manner, he was nevertheless gradually approaching the mode of outline and general method of modern times. Thus it happened that this work was an object of so much admiration to the people of that day—they having then never seen anything better—that it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpets and other festal demonstrations, from the house of Cimabue to the church, he himself being highly rewarded and honoured for it. It is further reported, and may be read in certain records of old painters, that, whilst Cimabue was painting this picture, in a garden near the gate of San Pietro, King Charles the Elder, of Anjou, passed through Florence, and the authorities of the city, among other marks of respect, conducted him to see the picture of Cimabue. When this work was thus shown to the king it had not before been seen by any one; wherefore all the men and women of Florence hastened in great crowds to admire it, making all possible demonstrations of delight. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, rejoicing in this occurrence, ever after-

wards called that place Borgo Allegri; and this name it has ever since retained, although in process of time it became enclosed within the walls of the city.

By these and other works Cimabue had now acquired a great name, as well as large profits, and was appointed—together with Arnolfo Lapi, an artist then highly renowned in architecture—to superintend the building of Santa Maria del Fiore, in Florence. But at length, and when he had lived sixty years, he departed to another life, in the year 1300, having achieved little less than the resurrection of painting from the dead. He left many disciples, and, among others, Giotto, who afterwards became a most eminent painter, and long dwelt in the house inhabited by his master, in the Via del Cocomero.

The portrait of Cimabue may be seen in the chapter of Santa Maria Novella. It is by Simon of Siena, and is in his picture of the Church Militant and Triumphant. This portrait is in profile, the face meagre, the beard short, reddish, and pointed; the head, after the manner of that day, enveloped in a hood, which is folded gracefully beneath the chin, and closely wraps the throat.

## GIOTTO.

[BORN 1266--DIED 1336.]

THE birth of this great man took place in the hamlet of Vespignano, fourteen miles from the city of Florence, in the year 1276. His father's name was Bondone, a simple husbandman, who reared the child, to whom he had given the name of Giotto, with such decency as his condition permitted. The boy was early remarked for extreme vivacity in all his childish proceedings, and for extraordinary promptitude of intelligence; so that he became endeared, not only to his father, but to all who knew him in the village and around it. When he was about ten years old, Bondone gave him a few sheep to watch, and with these he wandered about the vicinity—now here and now there. But, induced by Nature herself to the arts of design, he was perpetually drawing on the stones, the earth, or the sand, some natural object that came before him, or some fantasy that presented itself to his thoughts. It chanced one day that the affairs of Cimabue took him from Florence to Vespignano, when he perceived the young Giotto, who, while his sheep fed around him, was occupied in drawing one of them from the life, with a stone slightly pointed, upon a smooth clean piece of rock—and that without any teaching whatever, but such as Nature herself had imparted. Halting in astonishment, Cimabue inquired of the boy if he would accompany him to his home, and the child replied he would go willingly, if his father were content to permit it. Cimabue therefore requesting the consent of Bondone, the latter granted it readily, and suffered the artist to conduct his son to Florence, where, in a short



time, instructed by Cimabue and aided by Nature, the boy not only equalled his master in his own manner, but became so good an imitator of Nature, that he totally banished the rude Greek manner—restoring art to the better path adhered to in modern times, and introducing the custom of accurately drawing living persons from nature, which had not been used for more than two hundred years. Or, if some had attempted it, as said above, it was not by any means with the success of Giotto. Among the portraits by this artist which still remain is one of his contemporary and intimate friend, Dante Alighieri, who was no less famous as a poet than Giotto as a painter, and whom Messer Giovanni Boccaccio has lauded so highly in the introduction to his story of Messer Forese da Rabatta, and of Giotto the painter himself. This portrait is in the chapel of the palace of the Podestà in Florence; and in the same chapel are the portraits of Ser Brunetto Latini, master of Dante, and of Messer Corso Donati, an illustrious citizen of that day.

Passing through Arezzo, he painted one of the chapels of the capitular church, that of St. Francis, which is above the baptistery; and on a round column, which stands beside a very beautiful antique Corinthian capital, are portraits of St. Francis and St. Dominic, by his hand, both taken from nature. In the cathedral without Arezzo, he further executed the Martyrdom of St. Stephen, in one of the larger chapels; of this the composition is fine. Having finished these things, he proceeded to Assisi, a city of Umbria, being invited thither by Fra Giovanni of Mero in the March, who was then general of the fraternity of St. Francis. Here, in the upper church, and under the corridor which traverses the windows, he painted a series of thirty-two frescoes, representing passages from the life and acts of the saint—namely, sixteen on each side, a work which he executed so perfectly as to acquire great fame from it. And, of a truth, there is singular variety in these frescoes; not only in the gestures and attitudes of each figure, but also in the composition of all the stories: the different costumes of those times are also represented; and, in all the accessories, nature is most faithfully adhered to. Among other figures, that of a thirsty

man stooping to drink from a fountain is worthy of perpetual praise: the eager desire with which he bends towards the water is portrayed with such marvellous effect that one could almost believe him to be a living man actually drinking. There are many other parts of this work that well merit remark, but I refrain from alluding to them, lest I become too discursive. Let it suffice to say, that it added greatly to the fame of Giotto, for the beauty of the figures, the good order, just proportion, and life of the whole, while the facility of execution, which he had received from nature and afterwards perfected by study, was made manifest in every part of the work. Giotto has indeed well merited to be called the disciple of Nature rather than of other masters; having not only studiously cultivated his natural faculties, but being perpetually occupied in drawing fresh stores from Nature, which was to him the never-failing source of inspiration.

The Pisans entrusted him with the decoration of their Campo Santo. The edifice was scarcely completed, from the design of Giovanni Pisano, as I have said elsewhere, when Giotto was invited to paint a portion of the internal walls. This magnificent fabric, being encrusted externally with rich marbles and sculptures, executed at immense cost, the roof covered with lead, and the interior filled with antique monuments and sepulchral urns of Pagan times, brought to Pisa from all parts of the world, it was determined that the inner walls should be adorned with the noblest paintings. To that end Giotto repaired to Pisa, and on one of the walls of the Campo Santo he painted the history of Job, in six large frescoes. The figures of these paintings, and the heads, those of the men as well as the women, are exceedingly beautiful; the draperies also are painted with infinite grace; nor is it at all surprising that this work acquired so much fame for its author as to induce Pope Benedict IX. to send one of his courtiers from Treviso to Tuscany for the purpose of ascertaining what kind of man Giotto might be, and what were his works; that pontiff then proposing to have certain paintings executed in the church of St. Peter. The messenger, when on his way to visit Giotto, and to inquire what

other good masters there were in Florence, spoke first with many artists in Siena; then, having received designs from them, he proceeded to Florence, and repaired one morning to the workshop where Giotto was occupied with his labours. He declared the purpose of the pope, and the manner in which the pontiff desired to avail himself of his assistance, and finally, requested to have a drawing, that he might send it to his holiness. Giotto, who was very courteous, took a sheet of paper, and a pencil dipped in a red colour; then, resting his elbow on his side, to form a sort of compass, with one turn of the hand he drew a circle so perfect and exact that it was a marvel to behold. This done, he turned, smiling to the courtier, saying, "Here is your drawing." "Am I to have nothing more than this?" inquired the latter, conceiving himself to be jested with. "That is enough and to spare," returned Giotto. "Send it with the rest, and you will see if it will be recognised." The messenger, unable to obtain anything more, went away very ill-satisfied, and fearing that he had been fooled. Nevertheless, having despatched the other drawings to the pope, with the names of those who had done them, he sent that of Giotto also, relating the mode in which he had made his circle, without moving his arm and without compasses; from which the pope, and such of the courtiers as were well versed in the subject, perceived how far Giotto surpassed all the other painters of his time. This incident becoming known, gave rise to the proverb, still used in relation to people of dull wits—"Tu sei più tondo che l'O di Giotto"—the significance of which consists in the double meaning of the word "tondo," which is used in the Tuscan for slowness of intellect and heaviness of comprehension, as well as for an exact circle. The proverb has besides an interest from the circumstance which gave it birth.

The return of Giotto to Florence took place in the year 1316; but he was not long permitted to remain in that city, being invited to Padua by the Signori della Scala, for whom he painted a most magnificent chapel in the Santo, a church just then erected. From Padua he proceeded to Verona, where he painted certain pictures for Messer Cane, the father of Fran-

cesca di Rimini, in the palace of that noble, more particularly the portrait of Cane himself; he also executed a picture for the Fraternity of St. Francis. Having completed these works, Giotto departed for Tuscany, but was compelled to halt at Ferrara, where he painted certain works for the Signori d'Este, as well in their palace as in the church of Sant' Agostino, where they are still to be seen. Meanwhile, as it had come to the ears of Dante that Giotto was in Ferrara, he so contrived that the latter was induced to visit Ravenna, where the poet was then in exile, and where Giotto painted some frescoes, which are moderately good, in the church of San Francesco, for the Signori da Polenta. He then proceeded from Ravenna to Urbino, where he also painted some pictures.

Some time after this, and when Giotto had returned to Florence, Robert, King of Naples, wrote to his eldest son, Charles, King of Calabria, who was then in Florence, desiring that he would, by all means, send Giotto to him at Naples, he having just completed the convent and church of Santa Clara, which he desired to see adorned by him with noble paintings. Giotto, therefore, being thus invited by so great and renowned a monarch, departed with the utmost readiness to do him service, and being arrived, he painted various subjects, from the Old and New Testaments, in the different chapels of the building. It is said that the passages from the Apocalypse, which he has painted in one of these chapels, were inventions of Dante, as were probably those so highly eulogised of Assisi, respecting which we have already spoken at sufficient length. It is true that Dante was then dead, but it is very probable that these subjects may have been discussed between Giotto and him: a thing which so frequently happens among friends.

But to return to Naples. Giotto executed many works in the Castel dell' Uovo, particularly in the chapel, which greatly pleased the king, by whom Giotto was indeed so much beloved, that while at his work he was frequently held in conversation by that monarch, who took pleasure in watching the progress of his labours and in hearing his remarks. Now Giotto had



always a jest ready, and was never at a loss for a witty reply, so that he amused the king with his hand while he painted, and also by the acuteness of his pleasant conversation. Thus, one day, the king telling him that he would make him the first man in Naples, Giotto replied that he already was the first man in Naples, "for to that end it is that I dwell at the Porta Reale," where the first houses of the city stand. Another time, the king saying to him, "Giotto, if I were in your place, now that it is so hot, I would give up painting for a time, and take my rest." "And so I would do, certainly," replied Giotto, "if I were in your place." Giotto being thus so acceptable to King Robert, was employed by him to execute numerous paintings in a hall which King Alfonso afterwards destroyed to make room for the castle, and also in the church of the Incoronata. Among those of the hall, were many portraits of celebrated men, Giotto himself being of the number. One day the king, desiring to amuse himself, requested Giotto to depict his kingdom, when the painter, as it is said, drew an ass, bearing a pack-saddle loaded with a crown and sceptre, while a similar saddle lay at his feet, also bearing the ensigns of sovereignty: these last were all new; and the ass scented them with an expression of desire to change them for those he then bore. The king inquired what this picture might signify, when Giotto replied, "Such is the kingdom, and such the subjects, who are every day desiring a new lord."

After completing these works, and on the 9th of July 1334, Giotto commenced the campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore; the foundations were laid on massive stone, sunk twenty braccia beneath the surface, on a site whence gravel and water had previously been excavated; then having made a good concrete to the height of twelve braccia, he caused the remainder, namely eight braccia, to be formed of masonry. The bishop of the city, with all the clergy and magistrates, were present at the foundation, of which the first stone was solemnly laid by the bishop himself. The edifice then proceeded on the plan before mentioned, and in the Gothic manner of those times; all the historical representations which were to be the

ornaments, being designed with infinite care and diligence by Giotto himself, who marked out on the model all the compartments where the friezes and sculptures were to be placed, in colours of white, black, and red. The lower circumference of the tower is of one hundred braccia, twenty-five that is on each of the four sides. The height is one hundred and forty-four braccia. And if that which Lorenzo di Cione Ghiberti has written be true, as I fully believe it is, Giotto not only made the model of the campanile, but even executed a part of the sculptures and reliefs,—those representations in marble, namely, which exhibit the origin of all the arts. Lorenzo also affirms that he saw models in relief from the hand of Giotto, and more particularly those used in these works : an assertion that we can easily believe ; for design and invention are the parents of all the arts, and not of one only. This campanile, according to the design of Giotto, was to have been crowned by a spire or pyramid, of the height of fifty braccia ; but as this was in the old Gothic manner, the modern architects have always advised its omission ; the building appearing to them better as it is. For all these works, Giotto was not only made a citizen of Florence, but also received a pension of a hundred golden florins yearly—a large sum in those times—from the commune of Florence. He was also appointed superintendent of the work, which he did not live to see finished, but which was continued after his death by Taddeo Gaddi. Finally, and no long time after he had returned from Milan, having passed his life in the production of so many admirable works, and proved himself a good Christian as well as excellent painter, Giotto resigned his soul to God in the year 1336, not only to the great regret of his fellow-citizens, but of all who had known him, or even heard his name.

## BUONAMICO BUFFALMACCO.

[BORN . . . .—WAS LIVING IN 1351.]

THE Florentine painter, Buonamico di Cristofano, called Buffalmacco, was a disciple of Andrea Tafi, and is celebrated by Messer Giovanni Boccaccio, in his *Decameron*, as a man of most facetious character. He was besides, as is well known, the intimate companion of Bruno and Calandrino, both painters of joyous life, and, like himself, exceedingly fond of their jest. Buonamico was moreover endowed with considerable judgment in his art, as his works, scattered throughout Tuscany, sufficiently prove.

Among the Three Hundred Stories of Franco Sacchetti, we find it related—to begin with what our artist did while still a youth—that when Buffalmacco was studying with Andrea Tafi, his master had the habit of rising before daylight when the nights were long, compelling his scholars also to awake and proceed to their work. This provoked Buonamico, who did not approve of being aroused from the sweetest of his sleep; he bethought himself therefore of finding some means by which Andrea might be prevented from rising so early, and soon discovered what he sought. From a badly swept cellar he collected some thirty large beetles, and on the back of each he fastened a minute taper, by the aid of short and fine needles. These tapers he lighted at the time when Andrea Tafi was accustomed to awake, and sent the beetles one by one into the chamber of his master, through a cleft in the door. The latter aroused himself at the hour when he was wont to call Buffalmacco, but

seeing these lights wandering about his room, he began to tremble, like an old goose as he was, and in great terror repeated his prayers and psalms, recommending himself to God; finally, hiding his head within his bed-clothes, he made no attempt to call Buffalmacco that night, but lay trembling and terrified till the morning. Having risen when it was quite light, Tafi inquired of Buonamico if he had seen more than a thousand demons, as he had himself done. Buonamico replied that he had seen nothing, having kept his eyes closed; and wondered that he had not been called to work. "Call thee to work!" exclaimed the master; "I had other things to think of besides painting, and am resolved to stay in this house no longer." The following night, although Buonamico put three beetles only into the chamber of his master, yet Tafi, what with the terror inspired by the past night, and the fear of those few demons that he saw remaining, could get no sleep, and no sooner beheld the daylight than he rose and left the house, resolving never to return to it again; and many persuasions were needed to make him change his purpose. Finally, Buffalmacco, having brought him the priest of their parish, the latter comforted him as well as he could; and Tafi, discoursing of the affair with Buonamico, the disciple remarked, that he had ever been taught to consider the demons as the greatest enemies of God, and that, by consequence, they must also be most deadly adversaries to the painters: "For," said Buffalmacco, "besides that we always make them most hideous, we think of nothing but painting saints, both men and women, on walls and pictures; which is much worse, since we thereby render men better and more devout, to the great despite of the demons; and for all this the devils being angry with us, and having more power by night than by day, they play these tricks with us. I do believe, too, that they will get worse and worse, if this practice of rising to work in the night be not altogether abandoned." By these and other discourses of the kind, Buffalmacco managed his master so well, the priest supporting his assertions and opinions, that Tafi ceased to rise in the night, and the devils ceased to carry lights about



the house. But, a few months after, incited by the love of gain, and forgetting his terrors, Andrea Tafi began to arise as before, and to call Buffalmacco to work in the night. The beetles also then recommenced their wanderings, so that Andrea was compelled by his fears to desist entirely from that practice, being earnestly advised to do so by the priest. Nay, the story becoming known through the city, produced such an effect that neither Tafi nor other painters dared for a long time to work in the night.

Some time after this event, as Franco Sacchetti further relates, Buffalmacco having become a tolerably good master, left Andrea Tafi and began to work for himself; nor did he ever want commissions. Now it happened that he took a house, wherein he made his dwelling as well as studio, and where he had a weaver of wool for his neighbour. This fellow, a rich man for his station, was a sort of upstart, on whom his neighbours had imposed the name of Capodoca,<sup>1</sup> and who compelled his wife to rise before dawn, which was about the time when Buffalmacco, who had worked till then, was going to bed. This woman placed herself at her wheel, which she had unluckily planted exactly opposite to the pillow of Buonamico, where she span so industriously that he could get no sleep for the noise. Finding this, our painter betook himself to considering how best he could remedy the evil; nor was it long before he discovered the means of doing so. His room was separated from that of Capodoca by a wall of bricks only, behind which was the hearth of his troublesome neighbour; and by means of a cavity between the bricks, Buonamico could see what she was doing about her fire. Never slow at inventing mischief, the painter made a long tube, which he filled with salt, and choosing the moment when the wife of Goosehead was not on the watch, he poured the contents of his tube, as often as he thought meet, into the good woman's pot. In due time, Capodoca returned to dinner or supper, as the case might be, but he could not swallow a mouthful of his soup or meat, which was all rendered uneat-

<sup>1</sup> Goosehead.

able by the inordinate quantity of salt. Once and again he endured this with patience, only grumbling a little; but when he found that words did not suffice, he showered a storm of blows on the poor woman, who fell into despair, knowing how cautious she was in the salting of her cookery. One day that her husband was beating her for this cause, and that she was seeking to excuse herself, he fell into a worse rage than before, and so maltreated her, that, crying with all her might, she brought the whole neighbourhood to her aid. Buffalmacco was among the rest; and having heard the accusation brought by Goosehead against his wife, with the excuses she offered, he took up the word. "Faith, comrade," said he, "you should be a little more reasonable: you complain that your dish is too much salted morning and night; but I marvel, for my part, that your good wife can do anything right. I know not how she keeps on her feet in the day, seeing that she spends the best of her night at the spinning-wheel, and has not half sleep enough. Let her sleep at her ease till a reasonable hour, and you'll see that she'll then have her wits about her in the day, and not make blunders of this sort." He then turned to the other neighbours, and so placed the matter before them, that they all fell into his opinion, and told Capodoca that Buonamico was right, and that his advice ought to be taken. The husband believing that it was so, commanded his wife to abstain from rising in the night; when the cookery was salted as it ought to be; but if the woman recommenced her early rising, Buffalmacco resorted to his remedy, until Goosehead caused her entirely to abandon the practice.

Among the first works of Buffalmacco was one which he undertook for the convent of the nuns of Faenza, which was situated where the citadel of the Prato now stands; here he painted the whole church with his own hand, representing stories from the life of Christ, all extremely well done. This monastery is now destroyed, and the only relic of the work remaining is a coloured drawing in my book of designs, where the Slaughter of the Innocents is depicted by the hand of Buonamico himself. While this work for the nuns of Faenza was in progress, those ladies

sometimes took a peep at the painter through the screen that he had raised before his work. Now Buffalmacco was very eccentric and peculiar in his dress, as well as manner of living, and as he did not always wear the head-dress and mantle usual at the time, the nuns remarked to their intendant that it did not please them to see him appear thus in his doublet; but the steward found means to pacify them, and they remained silent on the subject for some time. At length, however, seeing the painter always accoutred in like manner, and fancying that he must be some apprentice, who ought to be merely grinding colours, they sent a message to Buonamico from the abbess, to the effect that they would like to see the master sometimes at the work, and not always himself. To this Buffalmacco, who was very pleasant in manner, replied, that as soon as the master came to the work, he would let them know of his arrival; but he perceived clearly how the matter stood. Thereupon, he placed two stools, one on the other, with a water-jar on the top; on the neck of the jar he set a cap, which was supported by the handle; he then arranged a long mantle carefully around the whole, and securing a pencil within the mouth on that side of the jar whence the water is poured, he departed. The nuns, returning to examine the work through the hole which they had made in the screen, saw the supposed master in full robes, when, believing him to be working with all his might, and that he would produce a very different kind of thing from any that his predecessor in the jacket could accomplish, they went away contented, and thought no more of the matter for some days. At length, they were desirous of seeing what fine things the master had done, and at the end of a fortnight (during which Buffalmacco had never set foot within the place), they went by night, when they concluded that he would not be there, to see his work. But they were all confused and ashamed, when one, bolder than the rest, approached near enough to discover the truth respecting this solemn master, who for fifteen days had been so busy doing nothing. They acknowledged, nevertheless, that they had got but what they merited—the work executed by the painter in the jacket being all that could be desired. The

intendant was therefore commanded to recall Buonamico, who returned in great glee and with many a laugh, to his labour, having taught these good ladies the difference between a man and a water-jug, and shown them that they should not always judge the works of men by their vestments. A few days from this time, Buffalmacco completed an historical painting, which pleased the nuns greatly, every part being excellent in their estimation, the faces only excepted, which they thought rather too pale and wan. Buonamico, hearing this, and knowing that the abbess had the very best Vernaccia that could be found in Florence, and which was, indeed, reserved for the uses of the mass, declared to the nuns that this defect could be remedied only by mixing the colours with good Vernaccia, but that when the cheeks were touched with colours thus tempered, they would become rosy and life-like enough. The good sisters, who believed all he said, on hearing this, kept him amply supplied with the very best Vernaccia, during all the time that his labours lasted, and he, joyously swallowing this nectar, found colour enough on his palette to give his faces the fresh rosiness those good dames desired.

In the year 1302 Buffalmacco was invited to Assisi, where, in the church of San Francesco, he painted in fresco the chapel of Santa Caterina, with stories taken from her life. These paintings are still preserved, and many figures in them are well worthy of praise. Having finished this chapel, Buonamico was passing through Arezzo, when he was detained by the Bishop Guido, who had heard that he was a cheerful companion as well as a good painter, and who wished him to remain for a time in that city, to paint the chapel of the episcopal church, where the baptistery now is. Buonamico began the work, and had already completed the greater part of it, when a very curious circumstance occurred; and this, according to Franco Sacchetti, who relates it among his *Three Hundred Stories*, was as follows:—The bishop had a large ape, of extraordinary cunning, the most sportive and mischievous creature in the world. This animal sometimes stood on the scaffold, watching Buonamico at his work, and giving a grave attention to every



action: with his eyes constantly fixed on the painter, he observed him mingle his colours, handle the various flasks and tools, beat the eggs for his paintings in distemper—all that he did, in short; for nothing escaped the creature's observation. One Saturday evening, Buffalmacco left his work; and on the Sunday morning, the ape, although fastened to a great log of wood, which the bishop had commanded his servants to fix on his foot, that he might not leap about at his pleasure, contrived, in despite of the weight, which was considerable, to get on the scaffold where Buonamico was accustomed to work. Here he fell at once upon the vases that held the colours, mingled them all together, beat up whatever eggs he could find, and, plunging the pencils into this mixture, he daubed over every figure, and did not cease until he had repainted the whole work with his own hand. Having done that, he mixed all the remaining colours together, and getting down from the scaffold, he went his way. When Monday morning came, Buffalmacco returned to his work; and, finding his figures ruined, his vessels all heaped together, and everything turned topsy-turvy, he stood amazed in sore confusion. Finally, having considered the matter within himself, he arrived at the conclusion that some Aretine, moved by jealousy, or other causes, had worked the mischief he beheld. Proceeding to the bishop, he related what had happened, and declared his suspicions, by all which that prelate was greatly disturbed; but, consoling Buonamico as he best could, he persuaded him to return to his labours, and repair the mischief. Bishop Guido, thinking him nevertheless likely to be right, his opinion being a very probable one, gave him six soldiers, who were ordered to remain concealed on the watch, with drawn weapons, during the master's absence, and were commanded to cut down any one who might be caught in the act, without mercy. The figures were again completed in a certain time; and one day that the soldiers were on guard, they heard a strange kind of rolling sound in the church, and immediately after saw the ape clamber up to the scaffold and seize the pencils. In the twinkling of an eye, the new master had mingled his colours; and the soldiers saw him set

to work on the Saints of Buonamico. They then summoned the artist, and showing him the malefactor, they all stood watching the animal at his operations, being in danger of fainting with laughter, Buonamico more than all; for, though exceedingly disturbed by what had happened, he could not help laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. At length he betook himself to the bishop, and said: "My lord, you desire to have your chapel painted in one fashion, but your ape chooses to have it done in another." Then, relating the story, he added: "There was no need whatever for your lordship to send to foreign parts for a painter, since you had the master in your house; but perhaps he did not know exactly how to mix the colours; however, as he is now acquainted with the method, he can proceed without further help: I am no longer required here, since we have discovered his talents, and will ask no other reward for my labours, but your permission to return to Florence." Hearing all this, the bishop, although heartily vexed, could not restrain his laughter; and the rather, as he remembered that he who was thus tricked by an ape, was himself the most incorrigible trickster in the world. However, when they had talked and laughed over this new occurrence to their heart's content, the bishop persuaded Buonamico to remain; and the painter agreed to set himself to work for the third time, when the chapel was happily completed. But the ape, for his punishment, and in expiation of the crimes he had committed, was shut up in a strong wooden cage, and fastened on the platform where Buonamico worked; there he was kept until the whole was finished; and no imagination could conceive the leaps and flings of the creature, thus enclosed in his cage, nor the contortions he made with his feet, hands, muzzle, and whole body, at the sight of others working, while he was not permitted to do anything.

Having painted many pictures for the whole March, Buonamico returned to Florence, but was delayed for some time at Perugia, on the way to his native city, where he painted the chapel of the Buontempi, in the church of San Domenico, the subject being stories, in fresco, from the life of the virgin-

martyr St. Catherine. On one of the walls in the old church of San Domenico, he also executed a fresco, representing the same Catherine, daughter of King Costa, when, disputing with certain philosophers, she converts them to the faith of Christ. This work is more beautiful than any other painted by Buffalmacco; and it may with truth be said that on this occasion he surpassed himself, insomuch that the people of Perugia were moved to require, according to what Franco Sacchetti<sup>1</sup> has written, that he should paint Sant' Ercolano, bishop and protector of Perugia, in the market-place of their city. Having agreed on the price, an enclosure of planks and matting was erected on the spot where the master was to work, that he might not be overlooked at his labours; which done, he commenced his operations. But ten days had not elapsed, before every man who passed the scaffolding inquired when this picture would be finished, as though they fancied works of that kind were to be cast in a mould; so that Buonamico became thoroughly wearied of their outcries. Wherefore, having brought the matter to an end, he resolved within himself to take a bit of quiet vengeance on the people for their troublesome importunities; nor did he fail to execute this determination. Keeping the work still enclosed, he admitted the Perugini to examine it, when all declared their entire satisfaction; but when they desired to remove the planks and matting, Buonamico requested that they should be suffered to remain for two days longer, as he wished to retouch certain parts when the painting was fully dried. This was agreed to; and Buonamico, who had made a great diadem for the saint in relieve of plaster, richly gilt, as was then the custom, instantly mounted his scaffold, and replaced this ornament by a coronet or garland of gudgeons, which wholly encircled the head. That accomplished, he paid his host one fine morning, and set off to Florence.

Two days having passed, the Perugini, not seeing the painter going about as they were accustomed to do, inquired of his host what had become of him, and hearing that he had departed to

<sup>1</sup> See the hundred and sixty-ninth story of Sacchetti.

Florence, they hastened to remove the planks that concealed the picture, when they discovered their saint solemnly crowned with gudgeons. This affront was at once made known to the authorities, who instantly sent horsemen in pursuit of Buonamico,—but all in vain, the painter having found shelter in Florence. They set an artist of their own, therefore, to remove the crown of fishes, and replace the diadem of the saint, consoling themselves by hurling all the abusive words they could think of at the head of Buonamico and of every other Florentine. But Buffalmacco, safe in his own city, cared but little for the outcries of the Perugini, and set himself to execute many works, of which, for the sake of brevity, I will not now speak further. One only shall here be mentioned, namely, the figure of our Lady with the Child in her arms, which he painted in fresco at Calcinaia. But the man for whom he had executed this work gave him only words in place of payment, and Buonamico, who was not accustomed to be trifled with or made a tool of, resolved to have his due by some means. He repaired one morning therefore to Calcinaia, and turned the child which he had painted in the arms of the Virgin into a young bear, but using water-colours only. This change being soon after discovered by the countryman who had had it painted, he hurried in despair to Buonamico, and implored him to remove the bear's cub and replace the child as before, declaring himself ready to pay all demands. This Buffalmacco amicably agreed to do, and was paid at once both for the first and second painting, a wet sponge having sufficed him to restore all to its pristine beauty. But it would occupy too much time if I were to recount all the pictures painted, and all the jests made by Buonamico, more particularly while he frequented the shop of Maso del Saggio, which was the general resort of all the jovial spirits and facetious companions to be found among the citizens of Florence. Here, then, I will make an end of my discourse concerning Buffalmacco. He died at the age of seventy-eight; and being extremely poor, because he had spent more than he had gained, which was ever his custom, he was succoured in his last illness by the Confraternity of the Misericordia, in the hospital of Santa Maria



Novella, and being dead, was buried with the other poor in the Ossa (for so they call the cloister or cemetery of the hospital), in the year 1340. The works of this painter were praised during his life, and since his death have ever been highly valued among the productions of that age.

## DELLO.

[BORN 1404—STILL LIVING IN 1464.]

ALTHOUGH the Florentine Dello was called a painter only while he lived, and has been so considered since his death, he was, nevertheless, attached to the art of sculpture also. But Dello, beside that he was somewhat capricious, perceived that he gained but little by working in terra-cotta, and, finding his poverty to demand some more effectual resource, he resolved, as he was a good designer, to give his attention to painting. In this pursuit he succeeded with no great difficulty, and soon acquired considerable facility in colouring, of which there are proofs in the many pictures which he left in different parts of his native city, more particularly in the smaller figures, to which he imparted a much better grace than is perceptible in the larger ones. And this peculiarity he turned to very good account, since it was the custom at that time for all citizens to have large coffers or chests of wood in their chambers, made in the manner of a sarcophagus, and having the covers or tops variously formed and decorated. There were none who did not cause these chests to be adorned with paintings; and in addition to the stories which it was usual to depict on the front and cover of these coffers, the ends, and frequently other parts, were most commonly adorned with the arms and other insignia of the respective families. The stories which decorated the front of the chest were, for the most part, fables taken from Ovid, or other poets; or narratives related by the Greek and Latin historians; but occasionally they were representations of jousts, tournaments, the chase, love-tales, or other similar



subjects, according as it best pleased the different owners of the chests. The inside of these coffers was then lined with linen, woollen, or such stuffs as best suited the condition and means of those who caused them to be made, for the better preservation of the cloth vestments and other valuable commodities stored in them. But what was more to the purpose for our artist, these chests were not the only movables adorned in the manner described, since the balustrades and cornices, the litters, elbow-chairs, couches, and other rich ornaments of the chambers, which in those days were of great magnificence, were beautified in like manner, as may be seen from numberless examples still remaining throughout all parts of our city. And this custom prevailed to such an extent for many years, that even the most distinguished masters employed themselves in painting and gilding such things. Nor were they ashamed of this occupation, as many in our days would be. The truth of what is here said may be seen at this day, among other instances, in certain coffers, elbow-seats, and cornices, in the chambers of the magnificent Lorenzo the Elder, of the house of Medici, on which were depicted—not by men of the common race of painters, but by excellent masters—all the jousts, tournaments, hunting parties and festivals, given by the duke, with other spectacles displayed, at that period, with so much judgment, such fertility of invention, and such admirable art. Such things, in brief, may be seen, not only in the palace and older houses belonging to the Medici, but relics of them remain in all the most noble dwellings of Florence. Nay, there are many of our nobles still attached to old usages, who will not permit these decorations to be removed for the purpose of being replaced by ornaments of modern fashion. Dello, therefore, of whom we have said that he was a good painter, more especially of small figures, which he finished with much grace, devoted himself to this occupation for many years, to his great profit and advantage. He was almost exclusively employed in painting coffers, elbow-chairs, couches, and other things in the manner above described; insomuch that this may be said to have been his chief and peculiar profession. But as nothing

in this world remains fixed, or will long endure, however good and praiseworthy it may be, so, refining on this first mode of ornament, the custom prevailed, after no long time, of forming richer decorations, by carvings in natural wood, covered with gold, which did indeed produce most rich and magnificent ornaments; it also became usual to paint such matters of household use, as are above described, in oil, the subjects being beautifully depicted stories, which then proved, and still continue to make manifest, the riches and magnificence of the citizens who possessed, as well as the ability of the painters who adorned them.

But let us come to the works of Dello, who was the first to devote himself diligently, and with good success, to undertakings of this character. In particular, he painted the entire furniture of a chamber for Giovanni dei Medici; a work which was then considered of rare excellence, and very beautiful of its kind; as certain relics which still remain prove it to have been. It is said that our artist was aided in this work by Donatello, then a boy, who made him various ornaments, and even stories, in basso-relievo, formed of stucco, chalk, glue, and pounded bricks, which, being gilded, served as a rich and beautiful accompaniment to the paintings. Of this work, as of many similar ones, Drea Cennini has made mention at considerable length in his book, of which I have before spoken sufficiently. And as it is desirable to preserve some memorial of these old things, I have caused many of them to be retained in the palace of my lord the Duke Cosmo. They are by the hand of Dello himself, and will always be worthy of attentive consideration, were it only for the various costumes of those times, vestments of men as well as of women, which are to be seen among them. The story, in fresco, of Isaac giving his benediction to Esau, which will be found on one side of the cloister of Santa Maria Novella, is by this master; it is painted in "terra-verde."

Shortly after completing this work, Dello was invited into Spain, where he entered the service of the king, and attained to so much credit that no artist need desire for himself more or better; and, although we are not acquainted with the particulars

of the works executed by Dello in those parts, we are authorised to suppose that they were good and beautiful, since he left the country both rich and honoured. After some years, having been royally remunerated for his labours, the master resolved to return to Florence, where he desired to show his friends how he had risen from extreme poverty to great riches. Wherefore, having gone to obtain the permission of the king, he not only received a gracious accordance of the same (although that monarch would have retained him, if such had been the pleasure of Dello), but also, as a more distinguished token of satisfaction from that most liberal sovereign, he was made a knight. Whereupon, the painter departing to Florence, there demanded the pennants and other insignia of his rank, with the confirmation of the privileges he had acquired; but these were refused to him, by the intervention of Filippo Spano degli Scolari, who had just returned victorious over the Turks, as grand seneschal of the King of Hungary. Dello immediately wrote to the King of Spain, complaining of this injury, when the Spanish sovereign addressed the senate with so much earnestness in his behalf, that the due and desired honours were conceded to him without further dispute. We find it related that, as Dello was returning to his house with the ensigns of his dignity, mounted on horseback, and robed in brocade, he passed through the Vacchereccia, where there dwelt many gold-workers, who had their shops there, and had known him in his youth. From one of these, scoffing words, either in scorn or jest, assailed the ear of the master as he rode along. Dello is reported to have turned towards the spot whence the voice proceeded, making gestures, expressive of disdain, with both his hands, but not uttering a word, and continuing his way, so that the occurrence was scarcely noticed by any one but the person who had derided him. But this circumstance, with other intimations, caused the artist to believe that envy would be no less active against him in his prosperity, than malignity had been when he was very poor; wherefore he resolved to return to Spain; and, having written to the king, whose reply quickly followed, he departed to that country, where he was received with great favour, and

gladly seen to fix his residence there. In Spain, therefore, our artist dwelt thenceforward, ever working, but living like a noble, and always painting in an apron of brocade. Thus then, he retreated before the shafts of envy, and lived honourably in that kingly court, where he also died, at the age of forty-seven, and was honourably entombed by the same sovereign who had so steadily protected him.



## LUCA DELLA ROBBIA.

[BORN 1400—DIED 1481.]

THE Florentine sculptor, Luca della Robbia, was born in the year 1388, in the house of his forefathers, which is situated near the church of San Barnaba, in Florence. He was there carefully reared and educated until he could not only read and write, but, according to the custom of most Florentines, had learned to cast accounts so far as he was likely to require them. Afterwards he was placed by his father to learn the art of the goldsmith with Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, who was then held to be the best master in Florence for that vocation. Luca therefore having learned to draw and to model in wax, from this Leonardo found his confidence increase, and set himself to attempt certain works in marble and bronze. In these also he succeeded tolerably well, and this caused him altogether to abandon his trade of a goldsmith and give himself up entirely to sculpture, inso-much that he did nothing but work with his chisel all day, and by night he practised himself in drawing; and this he did with so much zeal, that often when his feet were frozen with cold in the night-time, he kept them in a basket of shavings to warm them, that he might not be compelled to discontinue his drawings. Nor am I in the least astonished at this, since no man ever becomes distinguished in any art whatsoever who does not early begin to acquire the power of supporting heat, cold, hunger, thirst, and other discomforts; wherefore those persons deceive themselves altogether who suppose that while taking their ease and surrounded by all the enjoyments of the world, they may still attain to honourable distinction—for it is not by sleeping,

but by waking, watching, and labouring continually that proficiency is attained and reputation acquired.

Luca had scarcely completed his fifteenth year, when he was taken with other young sculptors to Rimini, for the purpose of preparing certain marble ornaments and figures for Sigismondo di Pandolfo Malatesti, lord of that city, who was then building a chapel in the church of San Francesco, and erecting a sepulchre for his wife, who had recently died. In this work Luca della Robbia gave a creditable specimen of his abilities, in some bassi-relievi, which are still to be seen there, but he was soon recalled to Florence by the wardens of Santa Maria del Fiore, and there executed five small historical representations for the campanile of that cathedral.

Messer Vieri dei Medici, a great and popular citizen of that day, by whom Luca was much beloved, commissioned him in the year 1405 to prepare the marble ornaments of the organ which the wardens were then causing to be constructed on a very grand scale, to be placed over the door of the sacristy in the above-named cathedral. In the prosecution of this work Luca executed certain stories for the basement, which represent the choristers, who are singing, in different attitudes: to the execution of these he gave such earnest attention and succeeded so well, that although the figures are sixteen braccia from the ground, the spectator can nevertheless distinguish the inflation of throat in the singers, and the action of the leader, as he beats the measure with his hands, with all the varied modes of playing on different instruments, the choral songs, the dances, and other pleasures connected with music, which are there delineated by the artist. On the grand cornice of this work, Luca erected two figures of gilded metal: these represent two angels entirely nude, and finished with great skill, as indeed is the whole performance, which was held to be one of rare beauty, although Donatello, who afterwards constructed the ornaments of the organ placed opposite to this, displayed much greater judgment and more facility than had been exhibited by Luca in his work, as will be mentioned in its proper place; for Donato completed his work almost entirely from the rough sketches,



without delicacy of finish, so that it has a much better effect in the distance than that of Luca, which, although well designed and carefully done, becomes lost to the observer in the distance, from the fineness of its finish, and is not so readily distinguished by the eye as is that of Donato, which is merely sketched.

But when, at the conclusion of these works, the master made up the reckoning of what he had received, and compared this with the time he had expended in their production, he perceived that he had made but small gains, and that the labour had been excessive; he determined, therefore, to abandon marble and bronze, resolving to try if he could not derive a more profitable return from some other source. Wherefore, reflecting that it cost but little trouble to work in clay, which is easily managed, and that only one thing was required, namely, to find some method by which the work produced in that material should be rendered durable, he considered and cogitated with so much good-will on this subject, that he finally discovered the means of defending such productions from the injuries of time. And the matter was on this wise: after having made experiments innumerable, Luca found that if he covered his figures with a coating of glaze, formed from the mixture of tin, litharge, antimony, and other minerals and mixtures, carefully prepared by the action of fire, in a furnace made for the purpose, the desired effect was produced to perfection, and that an almost endless durability might thus be secured to works in clay. For this process, then, Luca, as being its inventor, received the highest praise; and, indeed, all future ages will be indebted to him for the same.

The master, meanwhile, was not satisfied with his remarkable, useful, and charming invention, which is more particularly valuable for places liable to damp, or unsuited, from other causes, for paintings, but still continued seeking something more; and, instead of making his terra-cotta figures simply white, he added the further invention of giving them colour, to the astonishment and delight of all who beheld them. The fame of these works having spread, not only throughout Italy, but over all Europe,

there were so many persons desirous of possessing them, that the Florentine merchants kept Luca della Robbia continually at this labour, to his great profit; they then despatched the products all over the world. And now the master himself could no longer supply the numbers required; he therefore took his brothers, Ottaviano and Agostino<sup>1</sup> from the chisel, and set them to these works, from which both he and they gained much more than they had previously been able to earn by their works in sculpture; for, to say nothing of the commissions which they executed for the various parts of Tuscany, they sent many specimens of their art into France and Spain.

After these things, the master still sought to make further inventions, and laboured to discover a method by which figures and historical representations might be coloured on level surfaces of terra-cotta, proposing thereby to secure a more life-like effect to the pictures. Of this he made an experiment in a medallion, which is above the tabernacle of the four saints, near Or San Michele, on the plane of which our artist figured the insignia and instruments of the Guild of Manufacturers, divided into five compartments, and decorated with very beautiful ornaments. In the same place he adorned two other medallions in relief; in one he placed a Madonna for the Guild of the Apothecaries, and in the other a lily on a bale, for the Tribunal of the Merchants, with festoons of fruit and foliage of different kinds, so admirably done that they seem rather to be the natural substance than merely burnt and painted clay.

For Messer Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole, Luca della Robbia erected a sepulchre of marble, on which he placed the recumbent figure of Federigo, taken from nature, with three half-length figures beside; and between the columns which adorn this work, the master depicted garlands with clusters of fruit and foliage, so life-like and natural that the pencil could produce nothing better in oil-painting. This work is of a truth

<sup>1</sup> These artists were brothers to each other, but not to Luca della Robbia, nor did they even belong to his family.

most rare and wonderful, the lights and shadows having been managed so admirably, that one can scarcely imagine it possible to produce such effects in works that have to be completed by the action of fire. And if this artist had been accorded longer life, many other remarkable works would doubtless have proceeded from his hands, since, but a short time before his death, he had begun to paint figures and historical representations on a level surface, whereof I formerly saw certain specimens in his house, which led me to believe that he would have succeeded perfectly, had not death, which almost always carries off the most distinguished men just at the moment when they are about to do some good to the world, borne him from his labours before the time.

There still remained Ottaviano and Agostino, his brothers, who survived him, and to Agostino was born another Luca who was a most learned man in his day.

Of the same family was Andrea—he was, indeed, a nephew of Luca—who also worked in marble with great ability, as may be seen in the chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie, without the city of Arezzo, where he was commissioned by the commune to execute a vast marble ornament, comprising a large number of minute figures, some in mezzo-relievo and others in full relief.

The boys, some naked, others in swathing-clothes, which are in the medallions between the arches, in the loggia of the hospital of the Innocenti, are also by Andrea della Robbia. These are all truly admirable, and give a favourable idea of the ability and knowledge of art possessed by this master; there are, besides, a large—nay, an almost infinite number of other works, performed by him in the course of his life, which lasted eighty-four years. Andrea died in 1528, and I, being still but a boy and talking with him, have heard him say, or rather boast, that he had been one of those who bore Donato to his burial-place. I remember, too, that the good old man, speaking of this circumstance, seemed to feel no little pride in the share he had taken in it.

But to return to Luca, that master was buried, with the rest

of his family, in the tomb of his fathers, which is in the church of San Pier Maggiore, and after him Andrea della Robbia was entombed in the same sepulchre. The latter left two sons, who became monks in San Marco, where they received the cowl from the venerable Fra Girolamo Savonarola, who was ever held in great honour by the della Robbia family; wherefore it is that these artists have depicted him in the manner which we still see on the medallions. Andrea had three sons besides the monks above-mentioned—Giovanni (also an artist, and who had three sons, Marco, Lucantonio, and Simone, all of high promise, but who died of the plague in 1527); Luca and Girolamo, who devoted themselves to sculpture. Of the two last-named, Luca paid infinite attention to works in the glazed terra-cotta. Girolamo, who was the youngest of all, worked in marble and bronze, as well as terra-cotta, and by the emulation existing between himself, Jacopo Sansovino, Baccio Bandinelli, and other masters of his time, he had already become a good artist, when he was induced by certain Florentine merchants to visit France. Girolamo della Robbia laboured much in Orleans, and executed many works in various parts of the whole realm of France, acquiring high reputation and great riches. But after a time, understanding that the only brother now remaining to him in Florence was Luca, while he was himself alone in the service of the French king, and very wealthy, he invited his brother to join him in those parts, hoping to leave him the successor of his own prosperous condition and high credit. But the matter did not proceed thus. Luca died soon after his arrival in France, and Girolamo found himself once more alone and with none of his kin beside him. He then resolved to return to his native land, and there enjoy the riches acquired by his pains and labours, desiring moreover to leave some memorial of himself in his own country. In the year 1553 he established his dwelling in Florence accordingly, but was in a manner compelled to change his purpose, seeing that Duke Cosmo, by whom he had hoped to be honourably employed, was entirely occupied by the war in Siena; he therefore returned to die in France, when not only did his house remain closed



and his family become extinct, but art was at the same time deprived of the true method of working in the glazed terra-cotta. It is true that there were some who made attempts in this kind of sculpture after his decease, but no one of these artists ever approached the excellence of Luca the elder, of Andrea, and the other masters of that family.



## PAOLO UCCELLO.

[BORN 1397—DIED 1475.]

PAOLO UCCELLO would have proved himself the most original and inventive genius ever devoted to the art of painting, from the time of Giotto downwards, had he bestowed but half the labour on the delineation of men and animals that he lost and threw away over matters of perspective. For, although these studies are meritorious and good in their way, yet he who is addicted to them beyond measure, wastes his time, exhausts his intellect, and weakens the force of his conceptions, insomuch that he frequently diminishes the fertility and readiness of his resources, which he renders ineffectual and sterile. Nay, whoever bestows his attention on these points, rather than on the delineation of the living figure, will frequently derive from his efforts a dry and angular hardness of manner, which is a very common result of too close a consideration of minute points. There is, moreover, the highest probability that one so disposed will become unsocial, melancholy, and poor, as did Paolo Uccello, who, being endowed by nature with a subtle and inquiring spirit, knew no greater pleasure than that of undertaking over-difficult, or, rather, impossible problems of perspective; which, although, doubtless curious, and perhaps beautiful, yet so effectually impeded his progress in the more essential study of the figure, that his works became worse and worse, in that respect, the older he grew. It is by no means to be denied that the man who subjects himself to studies too severe, does violence to his nature; and, although he may sharpen his intellect on one point, yet whatever he does wants the grace and facility

natural to those who, proceeding temperately, preserve the calmness of their intelligence and the force of their judgment, keeping all things in their proper place, and avoiding those subtleties which rarely produce any better effect than that of imparting a laboured, dry, and ungraceful character to the production, whatever it may be, which is better calculated to move the spectator to pity than awaken his admiration. It is only when the spirit of inspiration is roused, when the intellect demands to be in action, that effectual labour is secured; then only are thoughts worthy of expression conceived, and things great, excellent, and sublime accomplished.

Paolo employed himself perpetually, and without any intermission whatever, in the consideration of the most difficult questions connected with art, insomuch that he brought the method of preparing the plans and elevations of buildings, by the study of linear perspective, to perfection. From the ground-plan to the cornices, and summit of the roof, he reduced all to strict rules, by the convergence of intersecting lines, which he diminished towards the centre, after having fixed the point of view higher or lower, as seemed good to him; he laboured, in short, so earnestly in these difficult matters, that he found means, and fixed rules, for making his figures really to seem standing on the plane whereon they were placed; not only showing how, in order manifestly to draw back or retire, they must gradually be diminished, but also giving the precise manner and degree required for this, which had previously been done by chance, or effected at the discretion of the artist, as he best could. He also discovered the method of turning the arches and cross-vaulting of ceilings; taught how floors are to be foreshortened by the convergence of the beams; showed how the artist must proceed, to represent columns bending around the sharp corners of a building, so that, when drawn in perspective, they efface the angle, and cause it to seem level. To pore over all these matters, Paolo would remain alone, seeing scarcely any one, and remaining almost like a hermit for weeks and months in his house, without suffering himself to be approached. But however difficult and beautiful these things may be, yet, if

he had expended the time given to them in the study of figures, he would have done much better; for, although his drawing of the latter is tolerably good, yet it wants much of the perfection which he might have given it by a more discreetly regulated attention; but by thus consuming his hours in pondering these devices, he found himself steeped in poverty all the days of his life, instead of attaining to the celebrity which he might otherwise have acquired. When, therefore, Paolo would sometimes exhibit his "mazzocchi,"<sup>1</sup> some pointed, others square, and all drawn in perspective under various aspects, his spheres having seventy-two facettes, like diamond points, with a morsel of chip bent upwards on each plane, and all the other strange whimsies over which he exhausted his strength and wasted his time, to the sculptor Donatello (who was his intimate friend), the latter would say to him, "Ah, Paolo, with this perspective of thine, thou art leaving the substance for the shadow. These things are serviceable to those only who work at inlaying of wood (tarsia), seeing that it is their trade to use chips and shavings, with circles and spirals, and squares, and such-like matters."

In the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in a chapel near the side door which opens on the road to San Giovanni, and wherein are certain works by Masaccio, Paolo painted an Annunciation, in fresco. In this picture he represented a building, which is highly worthy of attention; it was then a new, and was considered to be a difficult thing, since it was the first edifice depicted in a good manner, and with true and graceful proportions; by this work artists were taught that, by due arrangement, the level space which is in reality small and closely bounded may be made to appear extensive, and acquire the semblance of distance; and he who, after securing this, shall be capable of judiciously distributing his lights and shadows to their proper places, and of duly managing the colours, will doubtless produce the effect of a more complete

<sup>1</sup> Circlets armed with points or spikes, and placed on the escutcheons of families.

illusion to the eye, cause his pictures to exhibit higher relief, and give them a more exact resemblance to life and reality. Not satisfied with this, Paolo desired to prove his power of conquering a still greater difficulty; and drew a line of columns retiring in perspective, which he caused to bend round an angle, so as to efface the sharp angles of the ceiling on which the four Evangelists are painted; this also was considered a beautiful and difficult thing; nor can it be denied that Paolo was an able and ingenious artist in this department of his profession.

In San Miniato, without the city of Florence, this master painted the lives of the Holy Fathers in one of the cloisters. This work was principally in *terra verde*, but was partly coloured; and here Paolo did not pay sufficient regard to the harmony which the artist should study to preserve in stories that are represented with one colour only, seeing that he made his fields blue, his cities red, and the buildings varied, as best pleased his fancy, wherein he committed an error, for whatever we feign to make of stone, cannot and ought not to be tinted with other colours. It is said that when Paolo was occupied with this work, the abbot who then ruled at San Miniato gave him scarcely anything to eat but cheese, of which our painter, who was shy and timid, becoming tired, resolved to go no more to work at the cloister. The abbot sent to inquire the cause of his absence; but when Paolo heard the monks asking for him, he would never be at home, and if he chanced to meet any of the brothers of that Order in the streets of Florence, he hurried away with all speed, flying from them as fast as he was able. One day, two of the friars, more curious than the rest, and younger than Paolo, ran after and overtook him. They then inquired why he did not come to finish the work he had commenced, and wherefore he fled at the sight of one of their body. "You have so murdered me," replied Paolo, "that I not only run away from you, but dare not stop near the house of any joiner, or even pass by one, and all that is owing to the bad management of your abbot, for what with his cheese-pies and cheese-soup, he has made me swallow such a mountain of cheese, that I am all turned into cheese myself,



and tremble lest the carpenters should take me to make their glue with; of a surety, if I stayed with you any longer, I should be no more Paolo, but cheese." The monks, departing from him with peals of laughter, told the story to their abbot, who prevailed on him to return to his work, with the promise that he would order him dishes not made of cheese.

In the church of the Carmine, Paolo painted the altar of SS. Cosimo and Damiano, for the Pugliesi family, in the chapel of San Girolamo; and in the house of the Medici he painted several pictures on canvas and in distemper, representing various animals, which he greatly delighted in, and to the delineation of which he gave his most unwearied attention. He had numbers of painted birds, cats, and dogs in his house, with every other animal of which he could get the portrait, being too poor to keep the living creatures; and as he preferred birds to all other animals, he received the name of Paul of the Birds (Paolo Uccelli).<sup>1</sup>

Paolo was afterwards commissioned to paint some historical pictures in the cloister of Santa Maria Novella, the first of which are those seen on entering the cloister from the church. In these he depicted the creation of animals, exhibiting infinite numbers and varieties of every kind, whether belonging to earth, air, or water. Paolo Uccello was exceedingly fanciful, and delighted, as we have said, in representing his animals to perfection. We have here an instance of this in some lions which are about to fall on one another with open jaws, and whose fierce rage is expressed with the utmost truth, as is the timidity and velocity of the stags and deer, which also make part of the picture; the birds and fish are, in like manner, depicted with extraordinary exactitude in every feather and scale. In the same place this master portrayed the creation of our first parents, with their fall. This is in a very good manner; it is well and carefully executed; and in these pictures Paolo took pains to vary the colouring of the trees, a

<sup>1</sup> His real name was Paolo di Dono. His father was a barber-surgeon of Pratovecchio.



thing which it was not yet usual for the masters to accomplish very successfully. With respect to the landscapes, in like manner, Paolo was the first among the old painters who acquired a name for his labours in this branch of art, which he conducted to a higher degree of perfection than had been attained in it by the artists who preceded him. It is true that those who came after him succeeded much better than he had done; since, with all his pains, he could never impart to his landscapes that softness and harmony which have been given to works of this class in our times, by painting them in oil. It was quite enough for Paolo if he drew according to the rules of perspective, representing things as they stood, and giving all that he saw: fields, that is to say, with their ditches, their furrows, the ploughs on them, and every other minutiae of the kind, in his own dry and hard manner; whereas if he had selected the most effective characteristics of things, and represented such parts only as redound to the good general effect of the picture, he would have approached much more nearly to perfection.

The labours of Paolo, in painting, must have been very heavy, since he made so many drawings, that he left whole chests full of them to his relations, as I have learned from themselves. But, although it is a great thing to produce many sketches, it is a still greater to execute the works themselves in an effectual manner; for the finished picture possesses a more decided vitality than the mere sketch. In my collection of drawings I have many figures, studies in perspective, birds, and other animals, beautiful to a marvel, but the best of all is a kind of head-dress ("mazzocchio"), drawn in outline only, but so admirably done that nothing short of the patience of Paolo could have accomplished the task. This master was a person of eccentric character and peculiar habits; but he was a great lover of ability in those of his own art; and, to the end that their memory should remain to posterity, he drew, with his own hand, on an oblong picture, the portraits of five distinguished men, which he kept in his house as a memorial of them. The first of these portraits was that of the painter

Giotto, as one who had given light and new life to the art; the second was Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, for architecture; the third was Donatello, for sculpture; the fourth was himself, for perspective and animals; the fifth was his friend Giovanni Manetti, for mathematics. With this philosopher Paolo conferred very frequently, and held continual discourse with him concerning the problems of Euclid.

It is related of this master that, being commissioned to paint St. Thomas seeking the wound in the side of Christ, above the door of the church dedicated to that saint, in the Mercato Vecchio, he declared that he would make known in that work the extent of what he had acquired and was capable of producing, to which end he bestowed upon it the utmost care and consideration: he also caused an enclosure of planks to be constructed around it, that none might see the work until it should be entirely completed. One day Donato met him all alone, and asked him "what kind of a work is this of thine that thou art shutting up so closely?" To whom Paolo, answering, replied—"Thou shalt see it some day, let that suffice thee." Donato would not press him to say more, thinking that when the time came he should, as usual, behold some miracle. It chanced that Donato was in the Mercato Vecchio buying fruit one morning, when he saw Paolo Uccello, who was uncovering his picture. Saluting him courteously, therefore, his opinion was instantly demanded by Paolo, who was anxiously curious to know what he would say of the work. But when Donato had examined the painting very minutely, he turned to Paolo and said, "Why, Paolo! thou art uncovering thy picture just at the very time when thou shouldst be shutting it up from the sight of all!" These words so grievously afflicted the painter, that perceiving himself likely to incur derision instead of the glory that he had hoped for from this, his last labour, and not having the courage to show himself fallen, as he felt himself to be, he would no more leave his house, but shut himself up, devoting himself wholly to the study of perspective, which kept him in poverty and depression to the day of his death. He lived to become very old, but had secured little enjoyment for

his old age, and died in the year 1432, in his eighty-third year, when he was buried in the church of Santa Maria Novella.

Paolo Uccello left a daughter, who had some ability in design, and a wife, who was wont to relate that Paolo would stand the whole night through, beside his writing-table, seeking new terms for the expression of his rules in perspective ; and when she called him to come and sleep, he would reply, "Oh, what a delightful thing is this perspective !"—"O che dolce cosa è questa prospettiva !"

## LORENZO Ghiberti.

[BORN 1378—DIED 1455.]

LORENZO Ghiberti was the son of Bartoluccio Ghiberti, and in his early youth acquired the art of the goldsmith, under the care of his father, who was an excellent master and instructed him in such sort that Lorenzo, aided by his natural abilities, became a better goldsmith than his teacher. But delighting still more in the arts of design and sculpture, he sometimes worked in colours, and at other times employed himself in the casting of small figures in bronze, which he finished very gracefully. He also took much pleasure in imitating the dies of ancient coins and medals, besides which he frequently took the portraits of his different friends from the life.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst Lorenzo was thus labouring to acquire the art of gold-working with Bartoluccio, the plague, by which Florence was visited in the year 1400, broke out, as he relates himself in a book written with his own hand, wherein he discourses of matters touching the arts, and which is now in the possession of the venerable Messer Cosimo Bartoli, a Florentine gentleman. To this plague were added civil discords and various troubles in the city, from which Lorenzo was compelled to depart, when he repaired to Romagna, in company with another painter, where they worked together in Rimini, painting a chamber and other works for Signor Pandolfo Malatesti, which were all completed by them with great diligence and to the satisfaction of that

<sup>1</sup> He said of himself, "My mind has been very much directed to painting"; this is the impression given by his work in bronze.



noble, who, although young, took much pleasure in all things relating to art. Lorenzo meanwhile did not remit the prosecution of his studies in relation to design, but frequently executed reliefs in wax, stucco, and other materials of similar kind, well knowing that such reliefs are the drawing-exercises of sculptors, without practice in which they cannot hope to bring any great work to perfection. But Lorenzo did not long remain absent from his country. After the pestilence had ceased, the Signoria of Florence and the Guild of the Merchants resolved to proceed with the two doors of San Giovanni, one of the oldest and most important churches in the city, concerning which there had already been so much discourse and so many deliberations. The time was favourable for such an undertaking, the art of sculpture then possessing able masters in abundance, foreigners as well as Florentines: those in authority therefore, considering that the work ought to be done as well as talked of, gave orders that all the artists, masters of eminence throughout Italy, should be given to understand that they might repair to Florence, there to present a specimen of their abilities in a trial of skill, which was to be made by the composition and execution of an historical representation in bronze, similar to those which Andrea Pisano had executed for the first door.

Notice of this determination was sent by Bartoluccio to Lorenzo, who was then working in Pesaro, and whom his father-in-law urged to return to Florence, and show what he could do; saying, that this was an opportunity for making himself known and displaying his abilities, reminding him also that from the occasion now presenting itself, they might derive such advantages that neither one nor the other of them need any longer work at *pear-making*.<sup>1</sup> The words of Bartoluccio roused the spirit of Lorenzo in such a manner, that although the Signor Pandolfo, the other painter, and all the court, were treating him with the most amicable distinction, and entreated him to remain with them, he nevertheless took leave of that noble and of the painter, who were with difficulty persuaded to let him depart,

<sup>1</sup> Ear-rings, called *pears* from their form.



and saw him go with extreme regret; but no promises nor increase of appointments availed to detain him, every minute then seeming to Lorenzo a thousand years, until he found himself on the road to Florence. Departing from Pesaro, therefore, he arrived safely in his native city. A great concourse of foreign artists had by this time assembled at Florence, and had presented themselves to the syndics or consuls of the Guild, who chose seven masters from the whole number: three of these were Florentines, the remaining four were Tuscans. Each of these artists received a sum of money, and it was commanded that within a year each should produce a story in bronze as a specimen of his powers, all to be of the same size, which was that of one of the compartments in the first door. The subject was chosen by the consuls, and was the Sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham, that being selected as presenting sufficient opportunity for the artists to display their mastery over the difficulties of their art; this story comprising landscape, with human figures, nude and clothed, as well as those of animals; the foremost of these figures were to be in full relief, the second in half relief, and the third in low relief. The candidates for this work were Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, Donato and Lorenzo di Bartoluccio, who were Florentines, with Jacopo della Quercia, of Siena; Niccolo d'Arezzo, his disciple; Francesco di Valdambrina, and Simone da Colle, called Simon of the Bronzes. All these masters made a promise before the consuls that they would deliver each his specimen completed at the prescribed time, and all set themselves to the work with the utmost care and study, putting forth all their strength, and calling all their knowledge to aid, in the hope of surpassing one another. They kept their labours meanwhile entirely secret, one from the other, that they might not copy each other's plans. Lorenzo alone, who had Bartoluccio to guide him, which last suffered him to shrink before no amount of labour, but compelled him to make various models before he resolved on adopting any one of them—Lorenzo only, I say, permitted all the citizens to see his work, inviting them, or any stranger who might be passing and had acquaintance with the art, to say what they thought on the

subject; and these various opinions were so useful to the artist, that he produced a model, which was admirably executed and without any defect whatever. He then made the ultimate preparations, cast the work in bronze, and found it succeed to admiration; when Lorenzo, assisted by Bartoluccio his father, completed and polished the whole with such love and patience, that no work could be executed with more care, or finished with greater delicacy. When the time arrived for comparing the different works, Lorenzo's specimen, with those of all the other masters, were found to be completed, and were given to the Guild of the Merchants for their judgment. Wherefore, all having been examined by the syndics, and by many other citizens, there were various opinions among them touching the matter. Many foreigners had assembled in Florence—some painters, some sculptors, others goldsmiths: these were all invited by the consuls, or syndics, to give judgment on those works, together with the men of the same calling who dwelt in Florence. The number of these persons was thirty-four, all well experienced in their several arts. But although there were divers opinions among them touching various points, and one preferred the manner of this candidate and one of that, yet they all agreed that Filippo di Ser Brunellesco and Lorenzo di Bartoluccio had presented works of better composition, more richly adorned with figures, and more delicately finished than was that of Donato, although in his specimen also the design was exceedingly good. In the work of Jacopo della Quercia the figures were carefully designed, but wanted delicacy of finish. In the specimen of Francesco da Valdambina the heads were beautiful and the work well finished, but the composition was confused. That of Simone da Colle was a beautiful specimen of casting, because that was his peculiar branch of art, but the design was not good. The specimen presented by Niccolò d'Arezzo showed the hand of the practised master, but the figures were stunted and the work not well finished. The story executed by Lorenzo only, which is still to be seen in the Hall of Audience, belonging to the Guild of the Merchants, was perfect in all its parts. The whole work was admirably designed

and very finely composed : the figures graceful, elegant, and in beautiful attitudes ; and all was finished with so much care and to such perfection, that the work seemed not to have been cast and polished with instruments of iron, but looked rather as though it had been blown with the breath.

When Donato and Filippo saw the care and success with which Lorenzo had completed his specimen, they drew aside together, and, conferring with each other, decided that the work ought to be given to him, because it appeared to them that the public advantage, as well as individual benefit, would be thus best secured and promoted, since Lorenzo being very young—for he had not completed his twentieth year—would have the opportunity, while exercising his talents on that magnificent work, of producing those noble fruits of which his beautiful story gave so fair a hope. They declared that, according to their judgment, Lorenzo had executed his specimen more perfectly than any of the other artists, and that it would be a more obvious proof of envy to deprive him of it, than of rectitude to accord it to him.

Lorenzo therefore commenced the works for those doors, beginning with that which is opposite to the house of the wardens, and first he prepared a model, in wood, of the exact size which each compartment was to have in the metal, with the framework and the ornaments of the angles, on each of which was placed a head ; and all the decorations by which the stories of every compartment were to be surrounded. After having prepared and dried the mould with infinite care and exactitude in a workshop that he had procured opposite to Santa Maria Nuova, where the Weavers' Hospital now stands, and which was called the threshing-floor, he built an immense furnace, which I well remember to have seen, and there cast the portion he had prepared, in metal. But it pleased the fates that this should not succeed ; yet Lorenzo, perceiving in what point he had failed, did not lose courage, nor permit himself to despond ; but having promptly prepared another mould, without making the occurrence known to any one, he cast the piece again, when it succeeded perfectly. In this manner the artist



continued the whole work, casting each story himself; and when he had completed and polished it, he fixed it in its place. The arrangement of the stories is similar to that adopted by Andrea Pisano in constructing the first door, which had been designed for him by Giotto. The number of them is twenty; the subjects being taken from the New Testament: beneath these stories, in eight similar compartments, are figures of the four Evangelists, two on each leaf or fold of the door, with the four Doctors of the Church in like manner. All these figures are varied in their attitudes, vestments, and other particulars: one is reading, another writing; some are in deep meditation, and differing thus one from another, all, whether acting or reflecting, are equally life-like. The framework which encloses each picture is enriched with ornaments of ivy leaves and foliage of other kinds, with mouldings between them, and on each angle is a male or female head in full relief, purporting to represent the Prophets and Sybils. They are very beautiful, and their variety serves to prove the fertility of invention possessed by the master.

This great work was carried forward to its completion without sparing either cost, time, or whatever else could promote the successful termination of the enterprise; the nude figures are in all parts most beautiful, and the draperies, although still retaining some slight trace of the older manner of Giotto's day, have, nevertheless, a direct tendency towards that of more modern times, and this gives to figures of that size a grace of character which is very attractive. The composition of each story is, of a truth, so well arranged, the figures are so judiciously grouped, and so finely executed, that the whole work richly deserves the praise bestowed on it in the commencement, by Filippo. The merits of Lorenzo were most honourably acknowledged by his fellow-citizens, and from them in general, as well as from the artists in particular, whether compatriots or foreigners, he received the highest commendations. This work, with its exterior ornaments, which are also of metal, representing festoons of fruits, and figures of animals, cost 22,000 florins, and the door weighed 34,000 pounds.

The city of Florence had acquired so much glory and praise from the admirable works of this most ingenious artist, that a resolution was taken by the consuls of the Guild of the Merchants to give him a commission for the third door of San Giovanni, which was also to be of bronze. In the case of the first door which Lorenzo had made, he had followed the directions of the consuls, as regarded the decoration of the framework by which the figures were surrounded, since they had determined that the general form of all the doors should be similar to that constructed by Andrea Pisano. But having now seen how greatly Lorenzo had surpassed the elder master, the consuls resolved to change the position of the doors, and whereas that of Andrea had previously occupied the centre, they now placed it on the side of the building which stands opposite to the Misericordia, proposing that the new door to be made by Lorenzo should be substituted for it, and should thenceforward occupy the centre; for they fully expected that he would put forth every effort and zealously employ all the resources of his art, insomuch that they now placed themselves in his hands without reserve, referring the whole matter entirely to his care, and declaring that they gave him full permission to proceed with the work as he should think best,<sup>1</sup> and to do whatever might most effectually secure that this third door should be the richest, most highly adorned, most beautiful and most perfect, that he could possibly contrive, or that could be imagined. Nor would they have him spare either time or labour, to the end that as he had previously surpassed all the sculptors that had lived before him, so he might now eclipse and surpass all his own earlier works.

In this work, whether taken in detail or considered as a whole, we have proof of the wonders that may be accomplished by the fertile invention and practised ability of the sculptor, whether in full relief, in half relief, or in the low and lowest relief; the effect

<sup>1</sup> The entire disposition of the work was left to Ghiberti, so far as the execution was concerned; but it was the Consuls, who had charge of the whole, by whom the subjects were selected.



he may produce in the composition of his work, by the disposition of his figures, and by variety of attitude in male and female forms; the rich effects to be derived from the judicious introduction of buildings, and due attention to the laws of perspective, with the grace that results from according their appropriate expression to each sex, and to the different ages, as we see done in this work, where, in the old we admire gravity, and in the young their beauty and graceful lightness. Wherefore it may be truly affirmed that this work is in all respects perfect, and is the most admirable production that has ever been seen in the world, whether ancient or modern. The justice of the praises bestowed on Lorenzo for this work may be inferred from the words of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, who, standing to look at these doors, and being asked what he thought of them, and whether they were beautiful, replied in these words:—“*They are so beautiful that they would well stand at the gates of Paradise,*” a truly appropriate tribute, and offered by him who could well judge of the work. Well indeed might Lorenzo complete his undertaking successfully, since, from his twentieth year, wherein he commenced these doors, he laboured at them for forty years with a patience and industry more than extreme, and beyond the power of words to express.

After this most stupendous work, Lorenzo undertook the bronze ornaments of that door of the same church which is opposite to the Misericordia, with those admirably beautiful decorations of foliage which he did not survive to finish, being unexpectedly overtaken by death when he was making his arrangements, and had already nearly completed the model for reconstructing the door previously erected by Andrea Pisano. This model was suffered to be lost, but I saw it formerly, when I was but a youth, in Borgo Allegri, before the descendants of Lorenzo Ghiberti had permitted it to be ruined.

## MASACCIO.

[BORN 1401—DIED 1428.]

MASSACIO may be accounted among the first by whom art was in a great measure delivered from rudeness and hardness: he it was who taught the method of overcoming many difficulties, and led the way to the adoption of those beautiful attitudes and movements never exhibited by any painter before his day, while he also imparted a life and force to his figures with a certain roundness and relief, which render them truly characteristic and natural. Possessing extreme rectitude of judgment, Masaccio perceived that all figures not sufficiently foreshortened to appear standing firmly on the plane whereon they are placed, but reared up on the points of their feet, must needs be deprived of all grace and excellence in the most important essentials, and that those who so represent them prove themselves unacquainted with the art of foreshortening. It is true that Paolo Uccello had given his attention to this subject, and had done something in the matter, which did to a certain extent lessen the difficulty; but Masaccio, differing from him in various particulars, managed his foreshortenings with much greater ability, exhibiting his mastery of this point in every kind and variety of view, and succeeding better than any artist had done before him. He moreover imparted extreme softness and harmony to his paintings, and was careful to have the carnations of the heads and other nude parts in accordance with the colours of the draperies, which he represented with few and simple folds, as they are seen in the natural object. This has been of the utmost utility to succeeding artists, and Masaccio

deserves to be considered the inventor of that manner, since it may be truly affirmed that the works produced before his time should be called paintings; but that his performance, when compared with those works, might be designated life, truth, and nature.<sup>1</sup>

The birthplace of this master was Castello San Giovanni, in the Valdarno, and it is said that some figures are still to be seen there which were executed by Masaccio in his earliest childhood. He was remarkably absent and careless of externals, as one who, having fixed his whole mind and thought on art, cared little for himself or his personal interests, and meddled still less with the affairs of others; he could by no means be induced to bestow his attention on the cares of the world and the general interests of life, insomuch that he would give no thought to his clothing, nor was he ever wont to require payment from his debtors, until he was first reduced to the extremity of want; and for all this, instead of being called Tomasso, which was his name, he received from every one the cognomen of Masaccio, by no means for any vice of disposition, since he was goodness itself, but merely from his excessive negligence and disregard of himself; for he was always so friendly to all, so ready to oblige and do service to others, that a better or kinder man could not possibly be desired.

Although the works of Masaccio have ever been held in such high estimation, yet it is nevertheless the opinion, or rather the firm belief, of many, that he would have done still greater things for art, had not death, which tore him from us at the age of twenty-six, so prematurely deprived the world of this great master. Whether it were from envy, or because the best things have but rarely a long duration, so it was that he died in the fairest flower of his youth; and so sudden was his decease, that there were not wanting persons who ascribed it to poison rather than to any other cause.

<sup>1</sup> Leonardo da Vinci said of him: "Masaccio showed by his perfect works how those who take for their standard any but Nature—the mistress of all masters—wear themselves in vain."

## FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI.

[BORN 1377—DIED 1445.]

THERE are many men, formed by nature with small persons and features, who are endowed with so much greatness of soul and force of character, that unless they can occupy themselves with difficult and almost impossible deeds, and complete them to the admiration of others, can never find rest in their lives. And however mean or unpromising may be the occasion presented to such persons, however trifling the object to be attained, they find means to make it important, and to give it elevation. Therefore no one should look contemptuously on any one whom he may encounter, having an aspect divested of that grace and beauty which we might expect that Nature would confer, even from his birth, upon him who is to exhibit distinguished talent, since it is beyond doubt that beneath the clods of earth the veins of gold lie hidden. So much force of mind and so much goodness of heart are frequently born with men of the most unpromising exterior, that if these be conjoined with nobility of soul, nothing short of the most important and valuable results can be looked for from them, since they labour to embellish the unsightly form by the beauty and brightness of the spirit. This was clearly seen in Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, who was no less diminutive in person than Messer Forete da Rabatta and Giotto,<sup>1</sup> but who was of such exalted genius, that we may truly say he was given to us by Heaven, for the purpose of imparting a new spirit to architecture, which for hundreds of years had been lost. It

<sup>1</sup> See Novella v. of the Giornata vi. of the *Decameron*.



pleased Heaven, the earth having been for so many years destitute of any distinguished mind and divine genius, that Filippo Brunelleschi should leave to the world the most noble, vast, and beautiful edifice that had ever been constructed in modern times, or even in those of the ancients; giving proof that the talent of the Tuscan artists, although lost for a time, was not extinguished. He was, moreover, adorned by the most excellent qualities, among which was that of kindliness, in-somuch that there never was a man of more benign and amicable disposition; in judgment he was calm and dispassionate, and laid aside all thought of his own interest and even that of his friends, whenever he perceived the merits and talents of others to demand that he should do so. He knew himself, instructed many from the stores of his genius, and was ever ready to succour his neighbour in all his necessities; he declared himself the confirmed enemy of all vice, and the friend of those who laboured in the cause of virtue. Never did he spend his moments vainly, but, although constantly occupied in his own works, in assisting those of others, or administering to their necessities, he had yet always time to bestow on his friends for whom his aid was ever ready.

There lived in Florence, as we are told, a man of good renown, very praiseworthy habits, and much activity in his affairs, whose name was Ser Brunellesco di Lippo Lapi, and whose grandfather, called Cambio, was a very learned person, the son of a physician famous in those times, and named Maestro Ventura Bacherini. Ser Brunellesco chose for his wife a young woman of excellent conduct, from the noble family of the Spini, with whom, as part payment of her dowry, he received a house, wherein he and his children dwelt to the day of their death. This house stands in a corner on the side opposite to San Michele Bertelli, after passing the Piazza degli Algi, and while Brunellesco there exercised his calling and lived happily with his wife, there was born to him in the year 1377 a son, to whom he gave the name of Filippo, after his own father, who was then dead. This birth he solemnised with all possible gladness. As the infant advanced in childhood, his father taught him the first



rudiments of learning with the utmost care, and herein Filippo displayed so much intelligence, and so clear an understanding, as to frequently cause surprise that he did not take pains to attain perfection in letters, but rather seemed to direct his thoughts to matters of more obvious utility, a circumstance which caused Ser Brunellesco, who wished his son to follow his own calling of a notary, or that of his great-great-grandfather, very great displeasure. Perceiving, nevertheless, that the mind of the boy was constantly intent on various ingenious questions of art and mechanics, he made him learn writing and arithmetic, and then placed him in the Guild of the Goldsmiths, that he might acquire the art of design from a friend of his. This was a great satisfaction to Filippo, who no long time after he had begun to study and practise in that art, understood the setting of precious stones much better than any old artist in the vocation. He also executed works in niello and in basso-relievo, wherein he showed so complete a mastery of that art as to make it manifest that his genius must quickly overstep the limits of the goldsmith's calling. Subsequently, having made acquaintance with several learned persons, he began to turn his attention to the computation of the divisions of time, the adjustment of weights, and the movement of wheels; he considered the method by which they might best be made to revolve, and how they might most effectually be set in motion, making several very good and beautiful watches with his own hand.

Not content with this, Filippo was seized with an earnest desire to attempt the art of sculpture, and this wish took effect in such sort that Donatello, then a youth, being considered of great distinction and high promise therein, Filippo contracted a close intimacy with him; and each attracted by the talents of the other, they became so strongly attached that one seemed unable to live without the other. But Filippo, who was capable of attaining excellence in various departments, gave his attention to many professions, nor had any long time elapsed before he was considered by good judges to be an excellent architect.

Filippo Brunelleschi gave considerable attention to the study of perspective, the rules of which were then very imperfectly under-

stood, and often falsely interpreted; and in this he expended much time, until at length he discovered a perfectly correct method, that of taking the ground-plan and sections by means of intersecting lines, a truly ingenious thing, and of great utility to the arts of design. Nor did he fail to instruct those who worked in *tarsia*, which is a sort of inlaid work, executed in woods of various colours; the efforts of these artists he stimulated so powerfully, that from this time a better method prevailed, and many useful improvements were made in that branch of art, wherein, both then and at a later period, various excellent works were produced, from which Florence derived both fame and profit during many years. Messer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli returning to Florence about this time, and being at supper with some of his friends in a garden, invited Filippo also; who, hearing them discourse of the mathematical sciences, formed an intimate acquaintance with the philosopher, from whom he acquired the knowledge of geometry; and although Filippo possessed no learning, he yet reasoned so well, by the aid of his practical experience, that he frequently astonished Toscanelli. Thus labouring perpetually, Brunelleschi next turned his attention to the Scriptures, and never failed to be present at the disputations and preaching of learned men. From this practice he derived so much advantage, by help of his excellent memory, that the above-named Messer Paolo, alluding to him, was accustomed to say that, to hear Filippo in argument, one might fancy oneself listening to a second Paul. At the same time he gave earnest study to the works of Dante, with whose description of localities, and their respective distances, he made himself very familiar, and frequently availed himself of them in his conversations, when he would cite them by way of comparison. Nor, indeed, were his thoughts ever occupied otherwise than in the consideration of ingenious and difficult inquiries; but he could never find any one who gave him so much satisfaction as did Donato, with whom he often held confidential discourse; these two artists found perpetual pleasure in the society of each other, and frequently conferred together on the difficulties of their art.

In the year 1401 it was determined, seeing that sculpture had reached so elevated a condition, to reconstruct the two doors of the church and baptistery of San Giovanni, a work which, from the death of Andrea Pisano to that time, there had been no masters capable of conducting. The commission for the door being given to Lorenzo Ghiberti, Filippo and Donato, who were together, resolved to depart from Florence in company, and to remain in Rome for some years, Filippo proposing to pursue the study of architecture, and Donato that of sculpture. And this Filippo did, desiring to surpass Lorenzo and Donato, in proportion as architecture is more useful to man than are sculpture and painting. He first sold a small farm which he possessed at Settignano, when both artists departed from Florence and proceeded to Rome, where, when Filippo beheld the magnificence of the buildings and the perfection of the churches, he stood like one amazed, and seemed to have lost his wits. They instantly made preparations for measuring the cornices and taking the ground-plans of these edifices, Donato and himself both labouring continually, and sparing neither time nor cost. No place was left unvisited by them, either in Rome or without the city, and in the Campagna; nor did they fail to take the dimensions of any thing good within their reach. And as Filippo was free from all household cares, he gave himself up so exclusively to his studies, that he took no time either to eat or sleep; his every thought was of Architecture, which was then extinct: I mean the good old manner, and not the Gothic and barbarous one, which was much practised at that period. Filippo had two very great purposes in his mind, the one being to restore to light the good manner in architecture, which, if he could effect, he believed that he should leave a no less illustrious memorial of himself than Cimabue and Giotto had done; the other was to discover a method for constructing the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, the difficulties of which were so great, that, after the death of Arnolfo Lapi, no one had ever been found of sufficient courage to attempt the vaulting of that cupola without an enormous expense of scaffolding. He did not impart

this purpose, either to Donato or to any living soul, but he never rested while in Rome until he had well pondered on all the difficulties involved in the vaulting of the Ritonda [Pantheon], and had maturely considered the means by which it might be effected. He also well examined and made careful drawings of all the vaults and arches of antiquity: to these he devoted perpetual study, and if by chance the artists found fragments of capitals, columns, cornices, or basements of buildings buried in the earth, they set labourers to work and caused them to be dug out, until the foundation was laid open to their view. Reports of this being spread about Rome, the artists were called "treasure-seekers," and this name they frequently heard as they passed, negligently clothed, along the streets, the people believing them to be men who studied geomancy, for the discovery of treasures; the cause of which was that they had one day found an ancient vase of earth, full of coins. The money of Filippo falling short, he supplied the want by setting precious stones for the goldsmiths who were his friends; which served him for a resource. Donato having returned to Florence, Filippo was left alone in Rome, and there he laboured continually among the ruins of the buildings, where he studied more industriously than ever. Nor did he rest until he had drawn every description of fabric—temples, round, square, or octagon; basilicas, aqueducts, baths, arches, the Colosseum, amphitheatres, and every church built of bricks, of which he examined all the modes of binding and clamping, as well as the turning of the vaults and arches; he took note likewise of all the methods used for uniting the stones, as well as of the means used for securing the equilibrium and close conjunction of all the parts; and having found that in all the larger stones there was a hole, formed exactly in the centre of each on the under side, he discovered that this was for the insertion of the iron instrument with which the stones are drawn up, and which is called by us the mason's clamps, an invention, the use of which he restored and ever afterwards put in practice. The different orders were next divided by his cares, each order, Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian being placed apart; and such was the effect of



his zeal in that study, that he became capable of entirely reconstructing the city in his imagination, and of beholding Rome as she had been before she was ruined. But in the year 1407 the air of the place caused Filippo some slight indisposition, when he was advised by his friends to try change of air. He consequently returned to Florence, where many buildings had suffered by his absence, and for these he made many drawings and gave numerous counsels on his return.

In the same year an assemblage of architects and engineers was gathered in Florence, by the superintendents of the works of Santa Maria del Fiore, and by the syndics of the Guild of Wool-workers, to consult on the means by which the cupola might be raised. Among these appeared Filippo, who gave it as his opinion that the edifice above the roof must be constructed, not after the design of Arnolfo, but that a frieze, fifteen braccia high, must be erected, with a large window in each of its sides: since not only would this take the weight off the piers of the tribune, but would also permit the cupola itself to be more easily raised. Models after which the work might be executed were prepared in this manner accordingly. Some months after Filippo's return, and when he had recovered his health, he was one morning on the Piazza di Santa Maria del Fiore with Donato and other artists, when the conversation turned on the antiquity of works in sculpture. Donato related that when he was returning from Rome he had taken the road of Orvieto, to see the marble façade of the Duomo in that city—a work highly celebrated, executed by the hands of various masters, and considered in those days a very remarkable thing. He added that when afterwards passing by Cortona, he had there seen in the capitular church a most beautiful antique vase in marble, adorned with sculptures—a very rare circumstance at that time, since the large numbers of beautiful relics brought to light in our days had not then been disinterred. Donato proceeding to describe the manner in which the artist had treated this work, with the delicacy he had remarked in it, and the excellence, nay perfection, of the workmanship, Filippo became inflamed with such an ardent desire to see it, that,



impelled by the force of his love to art, he set off, as he was, in his mantle, his hood, and his wooden shoes, without saying where he was going, and went on foot to Cortona for that purpose. Having seen the vase and being pleased with it, he drew a copy of it with his pen, and returned therewith to Florence, before Donato or any other person had perceived that he had departed, all believing that he must be occupied in drawing or inventing something. Having got back to Florence, Filippo showed the drawing of the vase, which he had executed with much patience, to Donato, who was not a little astonished at this evidence of the love Filippo bore to art. The latter then remained several months in Florence, secretly preparing models and machines, all intended for the erection of the cupola, amusing himself meanwhile with perpetually bantering his brother-artists; for it was at this time that he made the jest of "the Grasso and Matteo." He frequently went also for his amusement to assist Lorenzo Ghiberti in finishing certain parts of the doors. But one morning the fancy took him, hearing that there was some talk of providing engineers for the construction of the cupola, of returning to Rome, thinking that he would have more reputation and be more sought from abroad, than if he remained in Florence. When Filippo had returned to Rome accordingly, the acuteness of his genius and his readiness of resource were taken into consideration, when it was remembered that in his discourses he showed a confidence and courage that had not been found in any of the other architects, who stood confounded, together with the builders, having lost all power of proceeding; for they were convinced that no method of constructing the cupola would ever be found, nor any beams that would make a scaffold strong enough to support the framework and weight of so vast an edifice. The superintendents were therefore resolved to have an end of the matter, and wrote to Filippo in Rome, entreating him to repair to Florence, when he, who desired nothing better, returned very readily. The wardens of Santa Maria del Fiore and the syndics of the Guild of Wool-workers, having assembled on his arrival, set before him all the difficulties, from the greatest to the

smallest, which had been made by the masters who were present, together with himself, at the audience; whereupon Filippo replied in these words—"Gentlemen Superintendents, there is no doubt that great undertakings always present difficulties in their execution; and if none ever did so before, this of yours does it to an extent of which you are not perhaps even yet fully aware, for I do not know that even the ancients ever raised so enormous a vault as this will be. I, who have many times reflected on the scaffoldings required, both within and without, and on the method to be pursued for working securely at this erection, have never been able to come to a decision; and I am confounded, no less by the breadth than the height of the edifice. Now if the cupola could be arched in a circular form, we might pursue the method adopted by the Romans in erecting the Pantheon of Rome; that is, the Rotunda. But here we must follow the eight sides of the building, dovetailing, and, so to speak, enchaining the stones, which will be a very difficult thing. Yet, remembering that this is a temple consecrated to God and the Virgin, I confidently trust that for a work executed to their honour they will not fail to infuse knowledge where it is now wanting, and will bestow strength, wisdom, and genius on him who shall be the author of such a project. But how can I help you in the matter, seeing that the work is not mine? I tell you plainly, that if it belonged to me, my courage and power would beyond all doubt suffice to discover means whereby the work might be effected without so many difficulties; but as yet I have not reflected on the matter to any extent, and you would have me tell you by what method it is to be accomplished. But even if your worships should determine that the cupola shall be raised, you will be compelled not only to make trial of me, who do not consider myself capable of being the sole adviser in so important a matter, but also to expend money, and to command that within a year, and on a fixed day, many architects shall assemble in Florence; not Tuscans and Italians only, but Germans, French, and of every other nation: to them it is that such an undertaking should be proposed, to the end that having discussed the

matter and decided among so many masters, the work may be commenced and entrusted to him who shall give the best evidence of capacity, or shall display the best method and judgment for the execution of so great a charge. I am not able to offer you other counsel, or to propose a better arrangement than this."

The proposal and plan of Filippo pleased the syndics and wardens of the works, but they would have liked that he should meanwhile prepare a model, on which they might have decided. But he showed himself to have no such intention, and taking leave of them, declared that he was solicited by letters to return to Rome. The syndics then perceiving that their request and those of the wardens did not suffice to detain him, caused several of his friends to entreat his stay; but Filippo not yielding to these prayers, the wardens, one morning, ordered him a present of money; this was on the 26th of May 1417, and the sum is to be seen among the expenses of Filippo, in the books of the works. All this was done to render him favourable to their wishes; but, firm to his resolution, he departed nevertheless from Florence and returned to Rome, where he continued the unremitting study of the same subject, making various arrangements and preparing himself for the completion of that work, being convinced, as was the truth, that no other than himself could conduct such an undertaking to its conclusion. Nor had Filippo advised the syndics to call new architects for any other reason than was furnished by his desire that those masters should be the witnesses of his own superior genius: he by no means expected that they could or would receive the commission for vaulting that tribune, or would undertake the charge, which he believed to be altogether too difficult for them. Much time was meanwhile consumed before the architects, whom the syndics has caused to be summoned from afar, could arrive from their different countries. Orders had been given to the Florentine merchants resident in France, Germany, England, and Spain, who were authorised to spend large sums of money for the purpose of sending them, and were commanded to obtain from

the sovereigns of each realm the most experienced and distinguished masters of the respective countries.

In the year 1420 all these foreign masters were at length assembled in Florence, with those of Tuscany, and all the best Florentine artists in design. Filippo likewise then returned from Rome. They all assembled, therefore, in the hall of the wardens of Santa Maria del Fiore, the syndics and superintendents together with a select number of the most capable and ingenious citizens being present, to the end that having heard the opinion of each on the subject, they might at length decide on the method to be adopted for vaulting the tribune. Being called into the audience, the opinions of all were heard one after another, and each architect declared the method which he had thought of adopting. And a fine thing it was to hear the strange and various notions then propounded on that matter; for one said that columns must be raised from the ground up, and that on these they must turn the arches, whereon the woodwork for supporting the weight must rest. Others affirmed that the vault should be turned in cysteolite or sponge-stone, thereby to diminish the weight; and several of the masters agreed in the opinion, that a column must be erected in the centre, and the cupola raised in the form of a pavilion, like that of San Giovanni in Florence. Nay, there were not wanting those who maintained that it would be a good plan to fill the space with earth, among which small coins (*quatrini*) should be mingled, that when the cupola should be raised, they might then give permission that whoever should desire the soil might go to fetch it, when the people would immediately carry it away without expense. Filippo alone declared that the cupola might be erected without so great a mass of wood-work, without a column in the centre, and without the mound of earth; at a much lighter expense than would be caused by so many arches, and very easily, without any frame-work whatever.

Hearing this, the syndics, who were listening in the expectation of hearing some fine method, felt convinced that Filippo had talked like a mere simpleton, as did the superintendents



and all the other citizens; they derided him therefore, laughing at him, and turning away; they bade him discourse of something else, for that this was the talk of a fool or madman, as he was. Therefore Filippo, thinking he had cause of offence, replied, "But consider, gentlemen, that it is not possible to raise the cupola in any other manner than this of mine, and although you laugh at me, yet you will be obliged to admit (if you do not mean to be obstinate), that it neither must nor can be done in any other manner; and if it be erected after the method that I propose, it must be turned in the manner of the pointed arch, and must be double—the one vaulting within, the other without, in such sort that a passage should be formed between the two. At the angles of the eight walls, the building must be strengthened by the dovetailing of the stones, and in like manner the walls themselves must be girt around by strong beams of oak. We must also provide for the lights, the staircases, and the conduits by which the rain-water may be carried off. And none of you have remembered that we must prepare supports within, for the execution of the mosaics, with many other difficult arrangements; but I, who see the cupola raised, I have reflected on all these things, and I know that there is no other mode of accomplishing them, than that of which I have spoken." Becoming heated as he proceeded, the more Filippo sought to make his views clear to his hearers, that they might comprehend and agree with him, the more he awakened their doubts, and the less they confided in him, so that, instead of giving him their faith, they held him to be a fool and a babbler. Whereupon being more than once dismissed, and finally refusing to go, they caused him to be carried forcibly from the audience by the servants of the place, considering him to be altogether mad. This contemptuous treatment caused Filippo at a later period to say that he dared not at that time pass through any part of the city, lest some one should say, "See, there goes that lunatic!" The syndics and others forming the assembly remained confounded, first, by the difficult methods proposed by the other masters, and next by that of Filippo,

which seemed to them stark nonsense. He appeared to them to render the enterprise impossible by his two propositions--first, by that of making the cupola double, whereby the great weight to be sustained would be rendered altogether unmanageable, and next by the proposal of building without a framework. Filippo, on the other hand, who had spent so many years in close study to prepare himself for this work, knew not to what course to betake himself, and was many times on the point of leaving Florence. Still, if he desired to conquer, it was necessary to arm himself with patience, and he had seen enough to know that the heads of that city seldom remained long fixed to one resolution. He might easily have shown them a small model which he had secretly made, but he would not do so, knowing the imperfect intelligence of the syndics, the envy of the artists, and the instability of the citizens, who favoured now one and now another, as each chanced to please them. And I do not wonder at this, because every one in Florence professes to know as much of these matters as do the most experienced masters, although there are very few who really understand them; a truth which we may be permitted to affirm without offence to those who are well informed on the subject. What Filippo therefore could not effect before the tribunal he began to attempt with individuals, and talking apart now with a syndic, now with a warden, and again with different citizens, showing moreover certain parts of his design, he thus brought them at length to resolve on confiding the conduct of this work, either to him or to one of the foreign architects. Hereupon, the syndics, the wardens, and the citizens, selected to be judges in the matter, having regained courage, gathered together once again, and the architects disputed respecting the matter before them; but all were put down and vanquished on sufficient grounds by Filippo, and here it is said that the dispute of the egg arose, in the manner following. The other architects desired that Filippo should explain his purpose minutely, and show his model as they had shown theirs. This he would not do, but proposed to all the masters, foreigners

and compatriots, that he who could make an egg stand upright on a piece of smooth marble should be appointed to build the cupola, since in doing that his genius would be made manifest. They took an egg accordingly, and all those masters did their best to make it stand upright, but none discovered the method of doing so. Wherefore Filippo, being told that he might make it stand himself, took it daintily into his hand, gave the end of it a blow on the plane of the marble, and made it stand upright. Beholding this, the artists loudly protested, exclaiming that they could all have done the same; but Filippo replied, laughing, that they might also know how to construct the cupola, if they had seen the model and design. It was thus at length resolved that Filippo should receive the charge of conducting the work, but he was told that he must furnish the syndics and wardens with more exact information.

He returned, therefore, to his house, and stated his whole purpose on a sheet of paper, as clearly as he could possibly express it.

When Filippo had written this, he repaired in the morning to the tribunal, and gave his paper to the syndics and wardens, who took the whole of it into their consideration; and although they were not able to understand it all, yet, seeing the confidence of Filippo, and finding that the other architects gave no evidence of having better grounds to proceed on, he, moreover, showing a manifest security by constantly repeating the same things in such a manner that he had all the appearance of having vaulted ten cupolas; the syndics, seeing all this, retired apart, and finally resolved to give him the work: they would have liked to see some example of the manner in which he meant to turn this vault without framework, but to all the rest they gave their approbation. And fortune was favourable to this desire: Bartolommeo Barbadori having determined to build a chapel in Santa Felicita, and having spoken concerning it with Filippo, the latter had commenced the work, and caused the chapel, which is on the right of the entrance, where is also the holy water vase (likewise by the hand of Filippo), to be vaulted without any framework. At the same time he constructed

another, in like manner, for Stiatta Ridolfi, in the church of Santo Jacopo sopr' Arno; that, namely, beside the chapel of the High Altar; and these works obtained him more credit than was given to his words. The consuls and wardens feeling at length assured, by the writing that he had given them, and by the works which they had seen, entrusted the cupola to his care, and he was made principal master of the works by a majority of votes. They would nevertheless not commission him to proceed beyond the height of twelve braccia, telling him that they desired to see how the work would succeed, but that if it proceeded as successfully as he expected, they would not fail to give him the appointment for the remainder. The sight of so much obstinacy and distrust in the syndics and wardens was so surprising to Filippo, that if he had not known himself to be the only person capable of conducting the work, he would not have laid a hand upon it; but desiring, as he did, to secure the glory of its completion, he accepted the terms, and pledged himself to conduct the undertaking perfectly to the end. The writing Filippo had given was copied into a book wherein the purveyor kept the accounts of the works in wood and marble, together with the obligation into which Filippo had entered, as above said. An allowance was then made to him, conformably with what had at other times been given to other masters of the works.

When the commission given to Filippo became known to the artists and citizens, some thought well of it, and others ill, as always is the case with a matter which calls forth the opinions of the populace, the thoughtless, and the envious. Whilst the preparation of materials for beginning to build was making, a party was formed among the artists and citizens; and these men proceeding to the syndics and wardens, declared that the matter had been concluded too hastily, and that such a work ought not to be executed according to the opinion of one man only; they added, that if the syndics and wardens had been destitute of distinguished men, instead of being furnished with such in abundance, they would have been excusable, but that



what was now done was not likely to redound to the honour of the citizens, seeing, that if any accident should happen they would incur blame, as persons who had conferred too great a charge on one man, without considering the losses and disgrace that might result to the public. All this considered, it would be well to give Filippo a colleague, who might restrain his impetuosity.

Lorenzo Ghiberti had at that time attained to high credit by the evidence of his genius, which he had given in the doors of San Giovanni; and that he was much beloved by certain persons who were very powerful in the government was now proved with sufficient clearness, since, perceiving the glory of Filippo to increase so greatly, they laboured in such a manner with the syndics and wardens, under the pretext of care and anxiety for the building, that Ghiberti was united with Filippo in the work. The bitter vexation of Filippo, the despair into which he fell, when he heard what the wardens had done, may be understood by the fact that he was on the point of flying from Florence; and had it not been that Donato and Luca della Robbia comforted and encouraged him, he would have gone out of his senses. A truly wicked and cruel rage is that of those men, who, blinded by envy, endanger the honours and noble works of others in the base strife of ambition; it was not the fault of these men that Filippo did not break in pieces the models, set fire to the designs, and in one half-hour destroy all the labours so long endured, and ruin the hopes of so many years. The wardens excused themselves at first to Filippo, encouraging him to proceed, reminding him that the inventor and author of so noble a fabric was still himself, and no other; but they, nevertheless, gave Lorenzo a stipend equal to that of Filippo. The work was then continued with but little pleasure on the part of Filippo, who knew that he must endure all the labours connected therewith, and would then have to divide the honour and fame equally with Lorenzo. Taking courage, nevertheless, from the thought that he should find a method of preventing the latter from remaining very long attached to that undertaking, he continued to proceed after the manner laid

down in the writing given to the wardens. Meanwhile the thought occurred to the mind of Filippo of constructing a complete model, which, as yet, had never been done. This he commenced forthwith, causing the parts to be made by a certain Bartolommeo, a joiner, who dwelt near his studio. In this model (the measurements of which were in strict accordance with those of the building itself, the difference being of size only) all the difficult parts of the structure were shown as they were to be when completed; as, for example, staircases lighted and dark, with every other kind of light, with the buttresses and other inventions for giving strength to the building, the doors, and even a portion of the gallery. Lorenzo, having heard of this model, desired to see it, but Filippo refusing, he became angry, and made preparations for constructing a model of his own, that he might not appear to be receiving his salary for nothing, but that he also might seem to count for something in the matter. For these models Filippo received fifty lire and fifteen soldi, as we find by an order in the book of Migliore di Tommaso, under date of the 3rd October 1419, while Lorenzo was paid three hundred lire for the labour and cost of his model, a difference occasioned by the partiality and favour shown to him, rather than merited by any utility or benefit secured to the building by the model which he had constructed.

This vexatious state of things continued beneath the eyes of Filippo until the year 1426, the friends of Lorenzo calling him the inventor of the work, equally with Filippo, and this caused so violent a commotion in the mind of the latter that he lived in the utmost disquietude. Various improvements and new inventions were, besides, presenting themselves to his thoughts, and he resolved to rid himself of his colleague at all hazards, knowing of how little use he was to the work. Filippo had already raised the walls of the cupola to the height of twelve braccia in both vaults, but the works, whether in wood or stone, that were to give strength to the fabric, had still to be executed, and as this was a matter of difficulty, he determined to speak with Lorenzo respecting it, that he might ascertain whether the

latter had taken it into consideration. But Lorenzo was so far from having thought of this exigency, and so entirely unprepared for it, that he replied by declaring that he would refer that to Filippo as the inventor. The answer of Lorenzo pleased Filippo, who thought he here saw the means of removing his colleague from the works, and of making it manifest that he did not possess that degree of knowledge in the matter which was attributed to him by his friends, and implied in the favour which had placed him in the situation he held. All the builders were now engaged in the work, and waited only for directions, to commence the part above the twelve braccia, to raise the vaults, and render all secure. The closing in of the cupola towards the top having commenced, it was necessary to provide the scaffolding, that the masons and labourers might work without danger, seeing that the height was such as to make the most steady head turn giddy, and the firmest spirit shrink, merely to look down from it. The masons and other masters were therefore waiting in expectation of directions as to the manner in which the chains were to be applied, and the scaffoldings erected; but, finding there was nothing determined on either by Lorenzo or Filippo, there arose a murmur among the masons and other builders, at not seeing the work pursued with the solicitude previously shown; and as the workmen were poor persons who lived by the labour of their hands, and who now believed that neither one nor the other of the architects had courage enough to proceed further with the undertaking, they went about the building employing themselves as they best could in looking over and furbishing up all that had been already executed.

But one morning Filippo did not appear at the works; he tied up his head, went to bed complaining bitterly, and causing plates and towels to be heated with great haste and anxiety, pretending that he had an attack of pleurisy. The builders, who stood waiting directions to proceed with their work, on hearing this, demanded orders of Lorenzo for what they were to do; but he replied, that the arrangement of the work belonged to Filippo, and that they must wait for him. "How?" said one

of them, "do not you know what his intentions are?" "Yes," replied Lorenzo, "but I would not do anything without him." This he said by way of excusing himself; for as he had not seen the model of Filippo, and had never asked him what method he meant to pursue, that he might not appear ignorant, so he now felt completely out of his depth, being thus referred to his own judgment, and the more so as he knew that he was employed in that undertaking against the will of Filippo. The illness of the latter having already lasted more than two days, the purveyor of the works, with many of the master-builders, went to see him, and repeatedly asked him to tell them what they should do; but he constantly replied, "You have Lorenzo, let him begin to do something for once." Nor could they obtain from him any other reply. When this became known, it caused much discussion: great blame was thrown upon the undertaking, and many adverse judgments were uttered. Some said that Filippo had taken to his bed from grief, at finding that he had not power to accomplish the erection of the cupola, and that he was now repenting of having meddled with the matter; but his friends defended him, declaring that his vexation might arise from the wrong he had suffered in having Lorenzo given to him as a colleague, but that his disorder was pleurisy, brought on by his excessive labours for the work. In the midst of all this tumult of tongues, the building was suspended, and almost all the operations of the masons and stone-cutters came to a stand. These men murmured against Lorenzo, and said, "He is good enough at drawing the salary, but when it comes to directing the manner in which we are to proceed, he does nothing; if Filippo were not here, or if he should remain long disabled, what can Lorenzo do? and if Filippo be ill, is that his fault?" The wardens, perceiving the discredit that accrued to them from this state of things, resolved to make Filippo a visit, and having reached his house they first condoled with him on his illness, told him into what disorder the building had fallen, and described the troubles which this malady had brought on them. Whereupon Filippo, speaking with much heat, partly to keep up the feint of illness, but also in part from



his interest in the work, exclaimed, "What! is not Lorenzo there? why does not he do something? I cannot but wonder at your complaints." To this the wardens replied, "He will not do anything without you." Whereunto Filippo made answer, "But I could do it well enough without him." This acute and doubly significant reply sufficed to the wardens, and they departed, having convinced themselves that Filippo was sick of the desire to work alone; they therefore sent certain of his friends to draw him from his bed, with the intention of removing Lorenzo from the work. Filippo then returned to the building, but seeing the power that Lorenzo possessed by means of the favour he enjoyed, and that he desired to receive the salary without taking any share whatever in the labour, he bethought himself of another method for disgracing him, and making it publicly and fully evident that he had very little knowledge of the matter in hand. He consequently made the following discourse to the Wardens (Operai), Lorenzo being present:—

"Signori Operai, if the time we have to live were as well secured to us as is the certainty that we may very quickly die, there is no doubt whatever that many works would be completed which are now commenced and left imperfect. The malady with which I have had the misfortune to be attacked might have deprived me of life and put a stop to this work; wherefore, lest I should again fall sick, or Lorenzo either, which God forbid, I have considered that it would be better for each to execute his own portion of the work: as your worships have divided the salary, let us also divide the labour, to the end that each, being incited to show what he knows and is capable of performing, may proceed with confidence, to his own honour and benefit, as well as to that of the republic. Now there are two difficult operations which must at this time be put into course of execution—the one is the erection of scaffoldings for enabling the builders to work in safety, and which must be prepared both for the inside and outside of the fabric, where they will be required to sustain the weight of the men, the stones and the mortar, with space also for the crane to draw up the different materials, and for other machines and

tools of various kinds. The other difficulty is the chain-work, which has to be constructed upon the twelve braccia already erected, this being requisite to bind and secure the eight sides of the cupola, and which must surround the fabric, enchaining the whole in such a manner that the weight which has hereafter to be laid on it shall press equally on all sides, the parts mutually supporting each other, so that no portion of the edifice shall be too heavily pressed on or over-weighted, but that all shall rest firmly on its own basis. Let Lorenzo then take one of these works, whichever he may think he can most easily execute, I will take the other and answer for bringing it to a successful conclusion, that we may lose no more time." Lorenzo having heard this, was compelled, for the sake of his honour, to accept one or other of these undertakings; and although he did it very unwillingly, he resolved to take the chain-work, thinking that he might rely on the counsels of the builders, and remembering also that there was a chain-work of stone in the vaulting of San Giovanni di Fiorenza, from which he might take a part, if not the whole, of the arrangement. One took the scaffolds in hand accordingly, and the other the chain-work, so that both were put in progress. The scaffolds of Filippo were constructed with so much ingenuity and judgment, that in this matter the very contrary of what many had before expected was seen to have happened, since the builders worked thereon with as much security as they would have done on the ground beneath, drawing up all the requisite weights and standing themselves in perfect safety. The models of these scaffolds were deposited in the hall of the wardens. Lorenzo executed the chain-work on one of the eight walls with the utmost difficulty, and when it was finished the wardens caused Filippo to look at it. He said nothing to them, but with some of his friends he held discourse on the subject, declaring that the building required a very different work of ligature and security to that one, laid in a manner altogether unlike the method there adopted; for that this would not suffice to support the weight which was to be laid on it, the pressure not being of sufficient strength and firmness. He added that the sums paid to Lorenzo, with the

chain-work which he had caused to be constructed, were so much labour, time, and money thrown away. The remarks of Filippo became known, and he was called upon to show the manner that ought to be adopted for the construction of such a chain-work; wherefore, having already prepared his designs and models, he exhibited them immediately, and they were no sooner examined by the wardens and other masters, than they perceived the error into which they had fallen by favouring Lorenzo. For this they now resolved to make amends; and desiring to prove that they were capable of distinguishing merit, they made Filippo chief and superintendent of the whole fabric for life, commanding that nothing should be done in the work but as he should direct. As a further mark of approbation, they presented him moreover with a hundred florins, ordered by the syndics and wardens, under date of August 13th, 1423, through Lorenzo Paoli, notary of the administration of the works, and signed by Gherardo di Messer Filippo Corsini; they also voted him an allowance of one hundred florins for life. Whereupon having taken measures for the future progress of the fabric, Filippo conducted the works with so much solicitude and such minute attention that there was not a stone placed in the building which he had not examined. Lorenzo, on the other hand, finding himself vanquished and in a manner disgraced, was nevertheless so powerfully assisted and favoured by his friends that he continued to receive his salary, under the pretext that he could not be dismissed until the expiration of three years from that time.

Drawings and models were meanwhile continually prepared by Filippo for the most minute portions of the building, for the stages or scaffolds for the workmen, and for the machines used in raising the materials. There were nevertheless several malicious persons, friends of Lorenzo, who did not cease to torment him by daily bringing forward models in rivalry of those constructed by him, insomuch that one was made by Maestro Antonio da Verzelli, and other masters who were favoured and brought into notice, now by one citizen and

now by another, their fickleness and mutability betraying the insufficiency of their knowledge and the weakness of their judgment, since having perfection within their reach, they perpetually brought forward the imperfect and useless.

The chain-work was now completed around all the eight sides, and the builders, animated by success, worked vigorously; but being pressed more than usual by Filippo, and having received certain reprimands concerning the masonry and in relation to other matters of daily occurrence, discontents began to prevail. Moved by this circumstance and by their envy, the chiefs among them drew together and got up a faction, declaring that the work was a laborious and perilous undertaking, and that they would not proceed with the vaulting of the cupola but on condition of receiving large payments, although their wages had already been increased and were much higher than was usual: by these means they hoped to injure Filippo and increase their own gains. This circumstance displeased the wardens greatly, as it did Filippo also; but the latter, having reflected on the matter, took his resolution, and one Saturday evening he dismissed them all. The men seeing themselves thus sent about their business and not knowing how the affair would turn, were very sullen; but on the following Monday Filippo set ten Lombards to work at the building, and by remaining constantly present with them, and saying, "do this here" and "do that there," he taught them so much in one day that they were able to continue the works during many weeks. The masons seeing themselves thus disgraced as well as deprived of their employment, and knowing that they would find no work equally profitable, sent messengers to Filippo, declaring that they would willingly return, and recommending themselves to his consideration. Filippo kept them for several days in suspense, and seemed not inclined to admit them again; they were afterwards reinstated, but with lower wages than they had received at first: thus where they had thought to make gain they suffered loss, and by seeking to revenge themselves on Filippo they brought injury and shame on their own heads.

The tongues of the envious were now silenced, and when the



building was seen to proceed so happily, the genius of Filippo obtained its due consideration; and, by all who judged dispassionately, he was already held to have shown a boldness which has perhaps never before been displayed in their works, by any architect ancient or modern. This opinion was confirmed by the fact that Filippo now brought out his model, in which all might see the extraordinary amount of thought bestowed on every detail of the building. The varied invention displayed in the staircases, in the provision of lights, both within and without, so that none might strike or injure themselves in the darkness, were all made manifest, with the careful consideration evinced by the different supports of iron which were placed to assist the footsteps wherever the ascent was steep. In addition to all this, Filippo had even thought of the irons for fixing scaffolds within the cupola, if ever they should be required for the execution of mosaics or pictures; he had selected the least dangerous positions for the places of the conduits, to be afterwards constructed for carrying off the rain water, had shown where these were to be covered and where uncovered; and had moreover contrived different outlets and apertures, whereby the force of the winds should be diminished, to the end that neither vapours nor the vibrations of the earth should have power to do injury to the building—all which proved the extent to which he had profited by his studies during the many years of his residence in Rome. When, in addition to these things, the superintendents considered how much he had accomplished in the shaping, fixing, uniting, and securing the stones of this immense pile, they were almost awe-struck on perceiving that the mind of one man had been capable of all that Filippo had now proved himself able to perform. His powers and facilities continually increased, and that to such an extent that there was no operation, however difficult and complex, which he did not render easy and simple; of this he gave proof in one instance, among others, by the employment of wheels and counterpoises to raise heavy weights, so that one ox could draw more than six pairs could have moved by the ordinary methods. The building had now reached such a height, that when a man had

once arrived at the summit, it was a very great labour to descend to the ground, and the workmen lost much time in going to their meals, and to drink; they also suffered great inconvenience in the heat of the day from the same cause; arrangements were therefore made by Filippo for opening wine-shops and eating-houses in the cupola; thus none were compelled to leave their labour until evening, which was a relief and convenience to the men, as well as a very important advantage to the work. Perceiving the building to proceed rapidly, and finding all his undertakings happily successful, the zeal and confidence of Filippo increased, and he laboured perpetually; he went himself to the ovens where the bricks were made, examined the clay, proved the quality of the working, and when they were baked he would select and set them apart with his own hands. In like manner, while the stones were under the hands of the stone-cutters, he would look narrowly to see that they were hard and free from clefts; he supplied the stone-cutters with models in wood or wax, or hastily cut on the spot from turnips, to direct them in the shaping and junction of the different masses; he did the same thing for the men who prepared the iron-work; Filippo likewise invented hooked hinges, with the mode of fixing them to the door-posts, and greatly facilitated the practice of architecture, which was certainly brought by his labours to a perfection that it would else perhaps never have attained among the Tuscans.

Filippo also constructed a model for the lantern with his own hand; it had eight sides, the proportions were in harmony with those of the cupola, and for the invention as well as variety and decoration, it was certainly very beautiful. He did not omit the staircase for ascending to the ball, which was an admirable thing; but as he had closed the entrance with a morsel of wood fixed at the lower part, no one but himself knew its position. Filippo was now highly renowned, but notwithstanding this, and although he had already overcome the envy and abated the arrogance of so many opponents, he could not yet escape the vexation of finding that all the masters of Florence, when his model had been seen, were setting themselves to make others

in various manners; nay, there was even a lady of the Gaddi family who ventured to place her knowledge in competition with that of Filippo. The latter, meanwhile, could not refrain from laughing at the presumption of these people, and when he was told by certain of his friends that he ought not to show his model to any artist lest they should learn from it, he replied that there was but one true model, and that the others were good for nothing. Some of the other masters had used parts of Filippo's model for their own, which, when the latter perceived, he remarked, "The next model made by this personage will be mine altogether." The work of Filippo was very highly praised, with the exception that, not perceiving the staircase by which the ball was to be attained, the model was considered defective on that point. The superintendents determined, nevertheless, to give him the commission for the work, but on condition that he should show them the staircase; whereupon Filippo, removing the morsel of wood which he had placed at the foot of the stair, showed it constructed as it is now seen, within one of the piers, and presenting the form of a hollow reed or blow-pipe, having a recess or groove on one side, with bars of bronze, by means of which the summit was gradually attained. Filippo was now at an age which rendered it impossible that he should live to see the lantern completed; he therefore left directions, by his will, that it should be built after the model here described, and according to the rules which he had laid down in writing, affirming that the fabric would otherwise be in danger of falling, since, being constructed with the pointed arch, it required to be rendered secure by means of the pressure of the weight to be thus added. But though Filippo could not complete the edifice before his death, he raised the lantern to the height of several braccia, causing almost all the marbles required for the completion of the building to be carefully prepared and brought to the place. At the sight of these huge masses as they arrived, the people stood amazed, marvelling that it should be possible for Filippo to propose the laying of such a weight on the cupola. It was, indeed, the opinion of many intelligent men that it could not possibly

support that weight. It appeared to them to be a piece of good fortune that he had conducted it so far, and they considered the loading it so heavily to be a tempting of Providence. Filippo constantly laughed at these fears, and having prepared all the machines and instruments required for the construction of the edifice, he ceased not to employ all his time in taking thought for its future requirements, providing and preparing all the minutiae, even to guarding against the danger of the marbles being chipped as they were drawn up; to which intent the arches of the tabernacles were built within defences of wood-work; and for all beside the master gave models and written directions, as we have said.

How beautiful this building is it will itself bear testimony. With respect to the height, from the level ground to the commencement of the lantern, there are one hundred and fifty-four braccia; the body of the lantern is thirty-six braccia high, the copper ball four braccia, the cross eight braccia, in all two hundred and two braccia. And it may be confidently affirmed that the ancients never carried their buildings to so vast a height, nor committed themselves to so great a risk as to dare a competition with the heavens, which this structure verily appears to do, seeing that it rears itself to such an elevation that the hills around Florence do not appear to equal it. And of a truth it might seem that the heavens did feel envious of its height, since their lightnings perpetually strike it.

At length, when he had become very old (he was sixty-nine years of age that is to say), Filippo departed to a better life, on the 16th of April 1446, after having laboured much in the performance of those works by which he earned an honoured name on earth, and obtained a place of repose in heaven. His death was deeply deplored by his country, which appreciated and esteemed him much more when dead than it had done while living. He was buried with most honourable and solemn obsequies in Santa Maria del Fiore, although his family sepulchre was in San Marco, beneath the pulpit and opposite the door, where may be found his escutcheon, bearing two fig-leaves with waves of green on a field of gold. His family



belongs to the Ferrarese, and came from Ficaruolo, a castle on the Po, and this is expressed by the leaves, which denote the place, and by waves which signify the river. The death of Filippo was mourned by large numbers of his brother artists, more especially by those who were poor, and whom he constantly aided and benefited. Thus living in so Christian-like a manner he left to the world the memory of his excellence, and of his extraordinary talents. To me it appears that from the time of the Greeks and Romans to the present there has appeared no more excellent or more admirable genius than Filippo; and he is all the more worthy of praise, because in his time the German manner was in high favour through all Italy, being that in practice among all the elder artists, as may be seen in numerous edifices. It was Filippo who revived the use of the antique cornices, and who restored the Tuscan, Corinthian, Doric, and Ionic orders to their primitive forms.

## DONATELLO.

[BORN 1386—DIED 1466.]

THE sculptor Donato, called by his contemporaries Donatello, and who subscribes himself thus on some of his works, was born in Florence in the year 1386. He devoted himself to the arts of design, and was not only an excellent sculptor and admirable statuary, but was besides very skilful in works of stucco, well versed in the study of perspective, and highly esteemed as an architect. The productions of Donatello displayed so much grace and excellence, with such correctness of design, that they were considered to resemble the admirable works of the ancient Greeks and Romans more closely than those of any other master had ever done. Nor is it without good reason that he is acknowledged to be the first who conducted the practice of historical composition, in basso-relievo, into the right path; his works of that kind giving proof of so much thought, power, and facility, that he is at once perceived to have had the true intelligence and mastery of that branch of art, which he exercised with extraordinary success, insomuch that he has not only remained unsurpassed in that style, but has never been equalled by any artist, even down to our own days.

Donatello was brought up from early childhood in the house of Ruberto Martelli, and by his many good qualities, as well as by his diligence in the study of art, he secured the affection, not only of Martelli himself, but of his whole family. This master produced many works in his youth, but because they were many, they were not considered to be of any great account. The work which obtained him a name, and caused him to be known for

what he really was, was an Annunciation, executed in the stone called macigno, which was placed near the altar and chapel of the Cavalcanti family, in the church of Santa Croce, in Florence. For the same church Donato executed a Crucifix in wood, on which he bestowed extraordinary labour. When the work was completed, believing himself to have produced an admirable thing, he showed it to Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, his most intimate friend, desiring to have his opinion of it. Filippo, who had expected, from the words of Donato, to see a much finer production, smiled somewhat as he regarded it, and Donato seeing this, entreated him by the friendship existing between them to say what he thought of it. Whereupon Filippo, who was exceedingly frank, replied, that Donato appeared to him to have placed a Clown on the cross, and not a figure resembling that of Jesus Christ, whose person was delicately beautiful, and in all its parts the most perfect form of man that had ever been born. Donato hearing himself censured where he had expected praise, and more hurt than he was perhaps willing to admit, replied, "If it were as easy to execute a work as to judge it, my figure would appear to thee to be Christ and not a boor; but take wood, and try to make one thyself." Filippo, without saying anything more, returned home, and set to work on a Crucifix, wherein he laboured to surpass Donato, that he might not be condemned by his own judgment; but he suffered no one to know what he was doing. At the end of some months the work was completed to the height of perfection, and this done, Filippo one morning invited Donato to dine with him, and the latter accepted the invitation. Thereupon, as they were proceeding together towards the house of Filippo, they passed by the Mercato Vecchio, where the latter purchased various articles, and giving them to Donato, said, "Do thou go forward with these things to the house and wait for me there; I'll be after thee in a moment." Donato, therefore, having entered the house, had no sooner done so than he saw the Crucifix, which Filippo had placed in a suitable light. Stopping short to examine the work, he found it so perfectly executed, that feeling himself conquered, full of astonishment, and as it

were startled out of himself, he dropped the hands which were holding up his apron, wherein he had placed the purchases, when the whole fell to the ground, eggs, cheese, and other things, all broken to pieces and mingled together. But Donato, not recovering from his astonishment, remained still gazing in amazement and like one out of his wits when Filippo arrived, and inquired, laughing, "What hast thou been about, Donato? and what dost thou mean us to have for dinner, since thou hast overturned everything?" "I, for my part," replied Donato, "have had my share of dinner for to-day; if thou must needs have thine, take it. But enough said: to thee it has been given to represent the Christ; to me, boors only."

In that façade of Santa Maria del Fiore which faces the Campanile, Donato executed four figures, each five braccia high, two of which are portraits from the life, one of Francesco Soderini when a youth, the other of Giovanni di Barduccio Cherichini, now called the Zuccone. The latter is considered the most extraordinary and most beautiful work ever produced by Donatello, who, when he intended to affirm a thing in a manner that should preclude all doubt, would say, "By the faith that I place in my Zuccone." And while he was working on this statute he would frequently exclaim, while looking at it, "Speak then! why wilt thou not speak?"

Such was the estimation in which the talents of Donatello were held by Cosimo, that he kept him continually at work; and so great was the affection which Donatello, on his part, bore to Cosimo, that, at the slightest intimation, he comprehended all that was desired, and obediently fulfilled every wish. It is said that a Genoese merchant had caused Donato to make a bronze bust, of the size of life: it was a very beautiful work; and having to be carried to a great distance, was executed in a light and delicate manner. This commission had been procured for Donatello by the intervention of Cosimo; but when the bust was finished, and the merchant came to pay for it, the master appeared to him to demand too much for his work: thereupon the merchant was referred to Cosimo, who, having caused the bust to be taken to the upper court of the palace,



had it placed between the battlements which overlook the road, to the end that it might be seen the better. When Cosimo therefore sought to arrange the difference, he found the offer of the merchant to be very far from the demand of Donatello; and, turning towards him, observed that he offered too little; but the merchant, thinking it too much, replied that Donato could have made it in a month, or something better, and would thus be gaining more than half a florin per day. Donato then turned about in great anger, this remark having offended him highly; and, telling the merchant that he had found means in the hundredth part of an hour to spoil the whole labour and cares of a year, he gave a blow to the bust, which fell to the street below, and was dashed in pieces, at the same time observing to the merchant that it was easy to see he was better versed in bargaining for horse-beans than in purchasing statues. Regretting what had happened, the merchant would then have paid him double the sum demanded, on condition of his reconstructing the bust; but this Donato could not be persuaded to do, by all his promises; nor would he consent even at the request of Cosimo.

A vast number of works by this master exist in all parts of Padua. They caused him to be considered a wonder among the Paduans, and won him the commendations of all good judges. But this determined Donato to return to Florence; he declared that if he remained any longer in Padua he should forget all that he had acquired, from being so much praised by every one; wherefore he affirmed that he should return gladly to his native city, though he were to be continually censured there, since such censure would give him motives for study, and consequently conduce to his attainment of greater glory.

Fully to narrate the life and enumerate the works executed by this master would necessitate a long story, seeing that he occupied himself with so many things; giving his attention not only to works of importance, but also to the smallest matters connected with art. He frequently executed the arms of families, for example, placing them over the chimney-pieces, or on the fronts of the houses of the citizens, as may still be seen

in the house of the Sommai, which is opposite to that of the baker, della Vacca, where there is a most beautiful specimen of this kind: he made a chest or sarcophagus also, for the family of the Martelli, in the form of a cradle of wicker-work; this was intended for a tomb, and is deposited beneath the church of San Lorenzo, no tombs of any kind being allowed to appear above, or in the church itself—the epitaph of that of Cosimo de' Medici is alone excepted, and the entrance even of this is placed below, like that of the others. It is said that Simone, the brother of Donato, having prepared the model for the sepulchral monument of Pope Martin V., sent for Donato, to the end that he might see it before it should be cast, whereupon that master, proceeding to Rome accordingly, chanced to be there exactly at the time when the Emperor Sigismond was in the city, for the purpose of receiving the crown from Pope Eugenius IV.; wherefore he found himself compelled to give his attention to the sumptuous preparations made for that festival, which he did in company with his brother Simone, acquiring therefrom much renown and very great honour.

In effect, Donato was a master of such merit, and so admirable in all he did, that we may safely declare him to have been the first, who, by his knowledge, judgment, and practice, rendered the art of sculpture and of good design illustrious among the people of modern times. And he is all the more worthy of commendation, because in his day the antiquities now brought to light—the columns, triumphal arches, and vases—had not been discovered, and excavated from the earth. Donato was, moreover, the principal cause of the determination taken by Cosimo de' Medici to bring the antiquities now in the Palazzo Medici to Florence; and all of these he restored with his own hand. He was most liberal, friendly, and courteous to all, being ever more careful for his friends than for himself. He attached little value to his gains, but kept what money he had in a basket, suspended by a cord to the roof, and from this all his assistants, as well as his friends, took what they needed, without being expected to say anything to him. He passed his old age cheerfully, and when he became too decrepit to work longer,

he was taken care of by Cosimo and others of his friends. It is said that when Cosimo found himself at the point of death, he left Donato in charge to Piero his son, who being a most careful executor of his father's will, bestowed on him a farm in Cafaggiuolo, the income from which was of such amount, that Donato might have lived on it most commodiously. He made great rejoicings over this gift accordingly, considering himself to be more than secured from the fear of dying of hunger by such a provision; but he had not held the property a year, when he returned to Piero, restoring the farm to him by the proper legal forms, declaring that he would not have his quiet destroyed, by thinking of household cares, and listening to the troubles and outcries of the farmers, who came pestering him every third day, now because the wind had unroofed the dove-cote, then because his cattle had been seized for taxes, and anon because of the storms which had cut up his vines and fruit-trees; with all which he was so completely worn out and wearied, that he would rather perish with hunger than be tormented by so many cares. Piero laughed at the simplicity of Donato, and to liberate him from this grievance he resumed possession of the farm (for this Donato absolutely would have done), but assigned him an income of equal or larger value, secured on the bank, and to be paid in cash; of this he received the due proportion every week, while he lived, an arrangement which rejoiced him greatly. Thus, as the friend and servant of the house of Medici, Donato lived in cheerfulness and free from cares all the rest of his days. When he had attained his eighty-third year, he became paralytic, and could no longer labour in any manner, whereupon he took to his bed, where he lay constantly, in a poor little house which he had in the Via del Cocomero, close to the nuns of San Niccolo, and here, becoming worse from day to day, and declining by degrees, he died on the 13th of December 1466. He was buried in the church of San Lorenzo, near the tomb of Cosimo, as he had himself commanded, to the end that his body might be near him dead, as his spirit had been ever near him when in life.

I think it would not be amiss to relate one more anecdote of

Donatello, which is as follows:—When he had already become sick, and a short time only before he died, there went to see him certain persons of his kinsfolk, and after they had saluted him, as is customary, and condoled with him on his illness, they told him that it was his duty to leave a farm which he had in the territories of Prato to them, and this they begged him very earnestly to do, although it was small and produced but a very little income. Hearing this, Donato, who showed good sense and rectitude in all that he did, replied thus, “I cannot content you in this matter, kinsmen, because I resolve—and it appears to me reasonable—to leave the farm to the countryman who has always tilled it, and who has bestowed great labour on it; not to you, who, without ever having done anything useful for it, or any other thing but thought of obtaining it, now come, with this visit of yours, desiring that I should leave it to you. Go! and the Lord be with you.” And of a truth such relations, who have no affection but to their own interests, and no motive of action but the hope of gain, should always be treated in that manner. Donato, therefore, having caused a notary to be summoned, left the said farm to the labourer who had always tilled it, and who had perhaps behaved better towards him in his need than those relations had done. His possessions connected with art were left to his disciples.



## FRATE GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE.

[BORN 1387—DIED 1455.]

FRA GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE, who while in the world was called Guido,<sup>1</sup> having been no less eminent as a painter and miniaturist than excellent as a churchman, deserves to be held in honourable remembrance for both these causes. This master might have lived in the world with the utmost ease and comfort, since, in addition to what he originally possessed, he might have gained whatever he desired by the exercise of the arts with which, while still very young, he was perfectly well acquainted. But he chose nevertheless, in the hope of ensuring the peace and quiet of his life, and of promoting the salvation of his soul, to enter the order of the preaching friars.<sup>2</sup>

Fra Giovanni, appearing to the Pope to be, as he really was, a person of most holy life, gentle and modest, the Pontiff, on the archbishopric of Florence becoming vacant, judged Fra Giovanni to be worthy of that preferment; but the Frate, hearing this, entreated his Holiness to provide himself with some other person, since he did not feel capable of ruling men. He added, that among the brethren of his order was a man well skilled in the art of governing others, a friend of the poor, and one who feared God; on this man he considered that the proposed dignity would be much more appropriately conferred

<sup>1</sup> He was born near the Castello di Vicchio, in the province of Mugello, in Tuscany.

<sup>2</sup> This he did in the year 1407. His convent was San Marco at Florence.

than on himself. The Pope hearing this, and remembering that what he said of this brother of his order was true, freely granted him the favour he desired, and thus was the Frate Antonino of the order of Friars-Preachers made archbishop of Florence. And the new prelate was in truth most illustrious, whether for learning or sanctity; he was of such a character, in fine, that he fully merited the honour of canonisation bestowed on him in our own days by Pope Adrian VI.

And would to God that all ecclesiastics (be it said without offence to the good among them) would employ their time, as did this excellent Fra Giovanni, so truly named Angelico, seeing that he continued the whole course of his life in the service of God, or in labouring for the benefit of the world and of his neighbour. And, of a truth, so extraordinary and sublime a gift as that possessed by Fra Giovanni, should scarcely be conferred on any but a man of most holy life, since it is certain that all who take upon them to meddle with sacred and ecclesiastical subjects, should be men of holy and spiritual minds; for we cannot but have seen that when such works are attempted by persons of little faith, and who do but lightly esteem religion, they frequently cause light thoughts and unworthy inclinations to awaken in the beholder; whence it follows that these works are censured for their offences in this kind, even while praised for the ability displayed in them as works of art. Yet I would not here give occasion to the mistake that things rude and inept shall therefore be holy, and that the beautiful and attractive are licentious; like many who, when they see feminine or youthful figures adorned with more than common beauty, instantly censure them as licentious, not perceiving how wrongfully they are condemning the sound judgment of the painter; for the latter believes the saints, who are celestial, to be as much superior to mere mortals in beauty, as heaven is superior to things earthly and the work of human hands; and, what is worse, they at the same time betray the unsoundness and impurity of their own hearts, by thus deducing evil consequences from, and finding causes of offence, in things which, if they were truly admirers of good, as by their stupid zeal they

desire to make themselves appear, would rather awaken in them aspirations towards heaven, and the wish to make themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things, from whom, as Himself the highest and most perfect, beauty and perfection have proceeded. Not that I would have any suppose me to approve the placing in churches of such figures as are depicted in all but perfect nudity; by no means: for in such cases the painter has not taken into consideration the reserve that was due to the place. He may have just cause for desiring to make manifest the extent of his power; but this should be done with due regard to circumstances, and not without befitting respect to persons, times, and places.

Fra Giovanni was a man of the utmost simplicity of intention, and was most holy in every act of his life. It is related of him, and it is a good evidence of his simple earnestness of purpose, that being one morning invited to breakfast by Pope Nicholas V., he had scruples of conscience as to eating meat without the permission of his prior, not considering that the authority of the pontiff was superseding that of the prior. He disregarded all earthly advantages; and, living in pure holiness, was as much the friend of the poor in life as I believe his soul now is in heaven. He laboured continually at his paintings, but would do nothing that was not connected with things holy. He might have been rich, but for riches he took no care; on the contrary, he was accustomed to say, that the only true riches was contentment with little. He might have commanded many, but would not do so, declaring that there was less fatigue and less danger of error in obeying others, than in commanding others. It was at his option to hold places of dignity in the brotherhood of his order, and also in the world; but he regarded them not, affirming that he sought no dignity and took no care but that of escaping hell and drawing near to Paradise.

Fra Giovanni was kindly to all, and moderate in all his habits, living temperately, and holding himself entirely apart from the snares of the world. He used frequently to say, that he who practised the art of painting had need of quiet, and should live without taking thought; adding, that he who does

Christ's work should always live with Christ. He was never seen to display anger among the brethren of his order; a thing which appears to me most extraordinary, almost incredible; if he admonished his friends, it was with gentleness and a quiet smile; and to those who sought his works, he would reply with the utmost cordiality, that they had but to obtain the assent of the prior, when he would assuredly not fail to do what they desired. In fine, this never sufficiently to be lauded father was most humble and modest in all his words and works; and in his painting both able and devout, and the saints that he painted have more of the air and expression of saints than those of any other master.

It was the custom of Fra Giovanni to abstain from retouching or improving any painting once finished. He altered nothing, but left all as it was done the first time, believing, as he said, that such was the will of God. It is also affirmed that he would never take pencil in hand until he had first offered a prayer. He is said never to have painted a Crucifix without tears streaming from his eyes, and in the countenances and attitudes of his figures it is easy to perceive proof of the sincerity and depth of his devotion to the Christian religion. He died in 1455, at the age of sixty-eight.



## ALESSO BALDOVINETTI.

[BORN 1422—DIED 1499.]

ALESSO BALDOVINETTI, attracted by his own inclination towards art, abandoned commerce, to which all his predecessors had given their attention (and in the honourable pursuit of which they had acquired riches, living in the manner of the most noble citizens), and devoted himself to painting, wherein he distinguished himself by his peculiar talent for imitating natural objects, as may be seen in the pictures executed by his hand.

This artist, while yet but a boy, and almost against the will of his father, who would have had him occupy himself with commerce, devoted his attention to drawing; and, in a short time, made so much progress therein, that his father consented to permit him to follow the bent of his inclinations.

He drew exceedingly well, and in my book there is a mule, depicted from nature by his hand, wherein every turn of each hair, all over the animal, is represented with much patience and considerable grace of manner. Alesso was extremely careful and exact in his works, and of all the minutiae which Mother Nature is capable of presenting, he took pains to be the close imitator; but he had a somewhat dry and hard manner, more especially in his draperies. He delighted in the representation of landscape, which he depicted with the utmost exactitude; thus we find in his pictures rivers, bridges, rocks, herbs, fruits, paths, fields, cities, castles, sands, and objects innumerable of the same kind.

It is said that Alesso took great pains to discover the true

method of working in mosaic, but that he never succeeded in discovering any thing worth naming, until at length he happened to meet with a German, who was going to Rome for the sake of the indulgences; this man he took into his house, and by him was made fully acquainted with all the rules and the whole method of proceeding.

Alesso Baldovinetti lived eighty years, and when he perceived the approaches of age, being desirous of a place where he might attend to the studies of his profession with a quiet mind, he purchased admission into the hospital of San Paolo. Here, perhaps in the hope of being more willingly received and more favourably treated, perhaps also by mere chance, he caused a great chest to be carried into the rooms assigned to him, giving it to be understood that there was a considerable sum of money contained in it. Believing this to be the case, the superintendent and other officials of the hospital, who knew that he had made a donation to their house of all that should be found belonging to him after his death, received and treated him with the utmost cordiality. But at the death of the painter nothing was found in the chest but some drawings, a few portraits on paper, and a small book, containing directions for preparing the stones and stucco for mosaic, with instructions in the method of using them. Nor was it any great marvel, according to what is said of Alesso, that no money was found there, since the master was so benevolent and obliging, that he possessed nothing which was not as much the property of his friends as of himself.

One of the disciples of Alesso Baldovinetti was the Florentine Graffione, who executed the figure of God the Father in fresco, with the angels around it, which is still to be seen over the door of the Innocenti. It is related that the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, conversing one day with Graffione, who was a singularly eccentric person, said to him, "I will have all the angles of the inside of the cupola decorated with mosaics and stucco-work." To which Graffione replied, "But you have not masters for it." Whereupon Lorenzo rejoined, "We have so much money that we shall make them." But Graffione instantly exclaimed,

“Heigh! Lorenzo; money can make no masters; it is the masters who make the money.” Graffione was a man of most fantastic character and singular habits. In his house he ate at no table but one prepared with his pasteboards, etc., and slept in no other bed than a great chest filled with straw and without sheets.

## FRA FILIPPO LIPPI.

[BORN 1406—DIED 1469.]

THE Carmelite monk, Fra Filippo di Tommaso Lippi, was born at Florence in a by-street called Ardiglione, under the Canto alla Cuculia, and behind the convent of the Carmelites. By the death of his father he was left a friendless orphan at the age of two years, his mother having also died shortly after his birth. The child was for some time under the care of a certain Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, the sister of his father, who brought him up with very great difficulty till he had attained his eighth year, when, being no longer able to support the burden of his maintenance, she placed him in the above-named convent of the Carmelites. Here, in proportion as he showed himself dexterous and ingenious in all works performed by hand, did he manifest the utmost dulness and incapacity in letters, to which he would never apply himself, nor would he take any pleasure in learning of any kind. The boy continued to be called by his worldly name of Filippo, and being placed with others, who like himself were in the house of the novices, under the care of the master, to the end that the latter might see what could be done with him, in place of studying, he never did any thing but daub his own books, and those of the other boys, with caricatures, whereupon the prior determined to give him all means and every opportunity for learning to draw. The chapel of the Carmine had then been newly painted by Masaccio, and this being exceedingly beautiful, pleased Fra Filippo greatly, wherefore he frequented it daily for his recreation, and continually practising there, in company with many other youths who were



constantly drawing in that place, he surpassed all the others by very much in dexterity and knowledge, insomuch that he was considered certain to accomplish some marvellous thing in the course of time. For not only in his youth, but when almost in his childhood, he performed so many praiseworthy labours that it was truly wonderful. While still very young he painted a picture in *terra verde*, in the cloister, near Masaccio's painting of the Consecration, the subject of which was a Pope confirming the Rule of the Carmelites, with others in fresco on several of the walls in different parts of the church; among these was a figure of St. John the Baptist, with stories from the life of that saint. Proceeding thus, and improving from day to day, he had so closely followed the manner of Masaccio, and his works displayed so much similarity to those of the latter, that many affirmed the spirit of Masaccio to have entered the body of Fra Filippo. On one of the pillars of the church, near the organ, he depicted the figure of San Marziale, a work by which he acquired great fame, seeing that it was judged to bear a comparison with those executed by Masaccio. Whereupon, hearing himself so highly commended by all, he formed his resolution at the age of seventeen, and boldly threw off the clerical habit.<sup>1</sup>

Some time after this event, and being in the March of Ancona, Filippo was one day amusing himself with certain of his friends in a boat on the sea, when they were all taken by a Moorish galley which was cruising in that neighbourhood, and led captive into Barbary, where he remained, suffering many tribulations, for eighteen months. But having frequent opportunities of seeing his master, it came into his head one day to draw his portrait; and finding an opportunity, he took a piece of charcoal from the fire, and with that delineated his figure at full length on a white wall, robed in his Moorish vestments. This being related to the master by the other slaves, to all of whom it appeared a miracle, the arts of drawing and painting not being practised in

<sup>1</sup> But he painted his own portrait with the tonsure, and his death is registered in the necrology of the Carmelites as that of a member, under the name *Frater Philippus*.

that country, the circumstance caused his liberation from the chains in which he had so long been held. And truly that was greatly to the glory of that noble art; for here was a man to whom belonged the right of condemning and punishing, but who, in place of inflicting pains and death, does the direct contrary, and is even led to show friendship, and restore the captive to liberty. Having afterwards executed certain works in painting for his master, he was then conducted safely to Naples, where he painted a picture on panel for King Alfonso, then Duke of Calabria, which was placed in the chapel of the castle, where the guard-room now is. But after no long time he conceived a wish to return to Florence, where he remained some months, during which time he painted an altar-piece for the nuns of Sant' Ambrogio, a most beautiful picture, by means of which he became known to Cosimo de' Medici, who was thereby rendered his most assured friend.

It is said that Fra Filippo was much addicted to the pleasures of sense, insomuch that he would give all he possessed to secure the gratification of whatever inclination might at the moment be predominant; but if he could by no means accomplish his wishes, he would then depict the object which had attracted his attention, in his paintings, and endeavour by discoursing and reasoning with himself to diminish the violence of his inclination. It was known that, while occupied in the pursuit of his pleasures, the works undertaken by him received little or none of his attention; for which reason Cosimo de' Medici, wishing him to execute a work in his own palace, shut him up that he might not waste his time in running about; but having endured this confinement for two days, he then made ropes with the sheets of his bed, which he cut to pieces for that purpose, and so having let himself down from a window, escaped, and for several days gave himself up to his amusements. When Cosimo found that the painter had disappeared, he caused him to be sought, and Fra Filippo at last returned to his work, but from that time forward Cosimo gave him liberty to go in and out at his pleasure, repenting greatly of having previously shut him up when he considered the danger that Fra Filippo had incurred

by his folly in descending from the window; and ever afterwards, labouring to keep him to his work by kindness only, he was by this means much more promptly and effectually served by the painter, and was wont to say that the excellencies of rare genius were as forms of light and not beasts of burden.

This master certainly displayed most wonderful grace in his works, blending his colours with the most perfect harmony, qualities for which he has ever been held in the highest esteem among artists, and for which he is extolled by modern masters with unlimited commendation; nay, there can be no doubt that so long as his admirable labours can be preserved from the voracity of time, his name will be held in veneration by all coming ages. In Prato, near Florence, where Fra Filippo had some relations, he took up his abode for some months, and there executed various works for the whole surrounding district, in company with the Carmelite, Fra Diamante, who had been his companion in novitiate. Having then received a commission from the nuns of Santa Margherita,<sup>1</sup> to paint a picture for the high altar of their church, he one day chanced to see the daughter of Francesco Buti, a citizen of Florence, who had been sent to the Convent, either as a novice or boarder.<sup>2</sup> Fra Filippo, having given a glance at Lucrezia, for such was the name of the girl, who was exceedingly beautiful and graceful, so persuaded the nuns, that he prevailed on them to permit him to make a likeness of her, for the figure of the Virgin in the work he was executing for them. The result of this was that the painter fell violently in love with Lucrezia, and at length found means to influence her in such a manner, that he led her away from the nuns, and on a certain day, when she had gone forth to do honour to the Girdle of our Lady, a venerated relic preserved at Prato and exhibited on that occasion, he bore her from their keeping. By this event the nuns were deeply disgraced, and the father of Lucrezia was so grievously afflicted thereat, that he

<sup>1</sup> He was made chaplain to this convent in 1456.

<sup>2</sup> She had really, it appears, been forced into the nunnery after her father's death.

never more recovered his cheerfulness, and made every possible effort to regain his child. But Lucrezia, whether retained by fear or by some other cause, would not return, but remained with Filippo, to whom she bore a son, who was also called Filippo, and who eventually became a most excellent and very famous painter like his father.<sup>1</sup>

In the Capitular Church of Prato, on a small tablet which is over the side-door as one ascends the steps, Fra Filippo depicted the death of San Bernardo, by the touch of whose bier many lame persons are restored to health. In this work are monks bewailing the loss of their master; and the exquisite grace of their heads, the truth and beauty of their grief, the plaintive expression of their weeping, are marvellous to behold. Some of the hoods and draperies of these monks have most beautiful folds, and the whole work merits the utmost praise for the excellence of its design, composition, and colouring, as well as for the grace and harmony of proportion displayed in it, completed as it is by the most delicate hand of Filippo. He was also appointed by the wardens of the same church, who desired to retain a memorial of him, to paint the chapel of the High Altar, and here we have likewise good evidence of his power, for besides the excellence of the picture as a whole, there are certain heads and draperies in it which are most admirable. In this work Fra Filippo made the figures larger than life, and hereby instructed later artists in the mode of giving true grandeur to large figures. There are likewise certain figures clothed in vestments but little used at that time, whereby the minds of others were awakened, and artists began to depart from that sameness which should rather be called obsolete monotony than antique simplicity. In the same work are stories from the life of Santo Stefano, to whom the

<sup>1</sup> This son was Filippino Lippi. It is supposed that the carrying off of Lucrezia is the event to which Giovanni de' Medici refers, where, in a letter to Bartolommeo Serragli, written from Florence, on the 27th of May, 1458, he uses the following words: "And so we laughed a good while at the error of Fra Filippo."—GAYE.



church is dedicated; they cover the wall on the right side, and consist of the Disputation, the Stoning and the Death of the Protomartyr. St. Stephen, calm and steadfast in the midst of terrible violence, is seen with his face towards heaven, imploring the pardon of the Eternal Father for those who thus attack him, with the utmost piety and fervour. This variety of expression is certainly very fine, and is well calculated to teach students of art the value of imitative power, and the importance of being able to express clearly the affections and emotions of the characters represented. Fra Filippo devoted the most earnest attention to this point, as is seen in this work; he has given the disciples who are burying St. Stephen attitudes so full of dejection, and faces so deeply afflicted, so drowned in tears, that it is scarcely possible to look at them without feeling a sense of sorrow. In the Baptism are beauty and goodness exemplified; and in the Feast of Herod, the splendour of the banquet, the address of Herodias, the astonishment of the guests, and their inexpressible sorrow when the head is presented on the charger, are rendered with admirable truth and effect. Among those present at the banquet are numerous figures in fine attitudes, exhibiting beautiful draperies and exquisite expressions of countenance. A portrait of Fra Filippo himself, taken with his own hand by help of a mirror, is one of them, and among the persons who bewail the death of St. Stephen is the portrait of his disciple, Fra Diamante, in a figure robed in black, and bearing the vestments of a bishop. This work is indeed the best of all that he produced, as well for the many fine qualities displayed in it, as for the circumstance that, having made the figures somewhat larger than life, he encouraged those who came after him to enlarge their manner. Fra Filippo was indeed so highly estimated for his great gifts, that many circumstances in his life which were very blamable received pardon, and were partly placed out of view, in consideration of his extraordinary abilities. He was indeed an artist of such power, that in his own time he was surpassed by none, and even in our days there are very few superior to him: therefore it is that he has not only been always eulogised by

Michael Angelo, but in many things has been imitated by that master.

Fra Filippo was very partial to men of cheerful character, and lived for his own part in a very joyous fashion. He lived creditably by his labours, and expended very large sums on the pleasures to which he continued to addict himself, even to the end of his life. Fra Filippo was requested by the commune of Spoleto, through the medium of Cosimo de' Medici, to paint the chapel in their principal church—that of Our Lady—and this work, with the assistance of Fra Diamante, he was conducting to a successful termination, when, being overtaken by death, he was prevented from completing it. It was said that the libertinism of his conduct occasioned this catastrophe, and that he was poisoned by certain persons related to the object of his love.

Fra Filippo finished the course of his life in the year 1438, being then fifty-seven years old. He left Filippo his son to the guardianship of Fra Diamante, with whom the child, then ten years old, returned to Florence, and was by him instructed in the art of painting.

The death of Fra Filippo caused much regret to many among his friends, more particularly to Cosimo de' Medici and Pope Eugenius IV. The latter had offered in his lifetime to give him a dispensation, that he might make Lucrezia di Francesco Buti his legitimate wife; but Fra Filippo, desiring to retain the power of living after his own fashion, and of indulging his love of pleasure as might seem good to him, did not care to accept that offer.<sup>1</sup>

During the pontificate of Sixtus IV., Lorenzo de' Medici was sent ambassador from the Florentines, and took the journey to Spoleto, for the purpose of demanding the remains of Fra Filippo from that Commune, to the end that they might be deposited in the Florentine cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore. But the Spoletines replied that they were but poorly provided

<sup>1</sup> The truth is, he accepted it, although it involved the loss of his ecclesiastical income.

with ornaments, above all with distinguished men; they consequently begged permission as a favour to retain them, that they might honour themselves therewith, adding, that since they possessed so many great men in Florence as almost to have a superfluity, they might content themselves without this one, and that reply was all that Lorenzo received.

## SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

[BORN 1447—DIED 1510.]

IN the same time with the illustrious Lorenzo de' Medici the elder, which was truly an age of gold for men of talent, there flourished a certain Alessandro, called after our custom Sandro, and further named Di Botticelli, for a reason which we shall presently see. His father, Mariano Filipepi, a Florentine citizen, brought him up with care, and caused him to be instructed in all such things as are usually taught to children before they choose a calling. But although the boy readily acquired whatever he wished to learn, yet was he constantly discontented; neither would he take any pleasure in reading, writing, or accounts, insomuch that the father, disturbed by the eccentric habits of his son, turned him over in despair to a gossip of his, called Botticelli, who was a goldsmith, and considered a very competent master of his art, to the intent that the boy might learn the same.

There was at that time a close connection and almost constant intercourse between the goldsmiths and the painters, wherefore Sandro, who possessed considerable ingenuity, and was strongly disposed to the arts of design, became enamoured of painting, and resolved to devote himself entirely to that vocation. He acknowledged his purpose at once to his father, and the latter, who knew the force of his inclinations, took him accordingly to the Carmelite monk, Fra Filippo, who was a most excellent painter of that time, with whom he placed him to study the art, as Sandro himself had desired.

Devoting himself thereupon entirely to the vocation he had



chosen, Sandro so closely followed the directions and imitated the manner of his master, that Fra Filippo conceived a great love for him, and instructed him so effectually, that Sandro rapidly attained to such a degree in art as none would have predicted for him. In the church of Ognissanti he painted a Sant' Agostino, in fresco, for the Vespucci: this is in the middle aisle, near the door which leads into the choir; and here Sandro did his utmost to surpass all the masters who were painting at the time, but more particularly Domenico del Ghirlandajo, who had painted a figure of St. Jerome on the opposite side. Sparing no pains, he thus produced a work of extraordinary merit. In the countenance of the Saint he has clearly manifested that power of thought and acuteness of perception which is, for the most part, perceptible in those reflective and studious men who are constantly occupied with the investigation of exalted subjects and the pursuit of abstruse inquiries.

This master painted a picture in the church of San Pietro for Matteo Palmieri, with a very large number of figures. The subject of this work, which is near the side-door, is the Assumption of Our Lady, and the zones or circles of heaven are there painted in their order. The Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Doctors, the Virgins, and the Hierarchies: all which was executed by Sandro according to the design furnished to him by Matteo, who was a very learned and able man. The whole work was conducted and finished with the most admirable skill and care: at the foot of it was the portrait of Matteo kneeling, with that of his wife. But although this picture is exceedingly beautiful and ought to have put envy to shame, yet there were found certain malevolent and censorious persons who, not being able to affix any other blame to the work, declared that Matteo and Sandro had erred gravely in that matter, and had fallen into grievous heresy.<sup>1</sup>

Whether this be true or not, let none expect to hear from me:

<sup>1</sup> The consequence was, that the altar was interdicted, and the picture covered from view. This picture is now in the National Gallery, London.

it is enough to note that the figures executed by Sandro in that work are entirely worthy of praise, and that the pains he took in depicting those circles of the heavens must have been very great, to say nothing of the angels mingled with the other figures, or of the various foreshortenings, all which are designed in a very good manner. Pope Sixtus IV., having erected the chapel built by him in his place at Rome, and desiring to have it adorned with paintings, commanded that Sandro Botticelli should be appointed superintendent of the work. He accordingly executed various pictures there. By these works Botticelli obtained great honour and reputation among the many competitors who were labouring with him, whether Florentines or natives of other cities, and received from the Pope a considerable sum of money; but this he consumed and squandered totally, during his residence in Rome, where he lived without due care, as was his habit. Having completed the work assigned to him, he returned at once to Florence, where, being whimsical and eccentric, he occupied himself with commenting on a certain part of Dante, illustrating the *Inferno*, and executing prints, over which he wasted much time, and, neglecting his proper occupation, he did no work, and thereby caused infinite disorder in his affairs. He likewise engraved many of the designs he had executed, but in a very inferior manner, the work being badly cut. The best attempt of this kind from his hand is the Triumph of Faith, by Fra Girolamo Savonarola, of Ferrara, of whose sect our artist was so zealous a partisan that he totally abandoned painting, and not having any other means of living, he fell into very great difficulties. But his attachment to the party he had adopted increased; he became what was then called a *Piagnone*, and abandoned all labour, insomuch that, finding himself at length become old, being also very poor, he must have died of hunger had he not been supported by Lorenzo de' Medici, for whom he had worked at the small hospital of Volterra and other places, who assisted him while he lived, as did other friends and admirers of his talents.

In San Francesco, outside the gate of San Miniato, Botticelli painted a Madonna, the size of life, surrounded by angels, which was considered a very beautiful picture. Now Sandro was fond of jesting, and often amused himself at the expense of his disciples and friends. In allusion to this habit, it is related that one of his scholars, named Biagio, had copied the above-mentioned picture very exactly, for the purpose of selling it: this Sandro did for him, having bargained with a citizen for six gold florins. When Biagio appeared, therefore, his master said to him, "Well, Biagio, I've sold thy picture for thee at last, but the buyer wishes to see it in a good light, so it must be hung up this evening at a favourable height, and do thou go to the man's house to-morrow morning and bring him here, that he may see it in its place; he will then pay thee the money." "Oh, master," quoth Biagio, "how well you have done;" and having suspended the picture at the due height, he went his way. Thereupon Sandro and Jacopo, who was another of his disciples, prepared eight caps of pasteboard, such as those worn by the Florentine citizens, and these they fixed with white wax on the heads of the eight angels, who, in the painting in question, were depicted around the Madonna. The morning being come, Biagio appears with the citizen who had bought the painting, and who was aware of the jest. Raising his eyes on entering the workshop, Blaise beholds his Madonna, not surrounded by angels, but in the midst of the Signoria of Florence, and seated among those caps. He was about to break forth into outcries and excuse himself to the citizen, but as the latter made no observation on the circumstance, and began to praise the picture, he remained silent himself. Ultimately, the citizen took him home to his house and paid him the six florins, which the master had bargained for, wherewith Biagio returned to the workshop, where he arrived just as Sandro and Jacopo had taken off the pasteboard head-dresses, and saw his angels as veritable angels again, and no longer citizens in their caps. Altogether astonished at what he beheld, the disciple turned to his master, and said, "Master mine, I know not whether I am

dreaming, or whether the thing be really so, but when I came in just now these angels had red caps on their heads, and now they have none! What may this mean?" "Thou art out of thy wits, Blaise," quoth Sandro; "this money hath made thy brain turn round; if the thing were as thou hast said, dost thou think this citizen would have bought thy picture?" "That is true," replied Biagio, "and he certainly said nothing about it; but for all that it seems a very strange matter." At last, all the other scholars getting round him, said so much that they made him believe the whole an imagination of his own.

A weaver of cloth once came to live close to Sandro, and this man erected full eight looms, which, when all were at work, not only caused an intolerable din with the trampling of the weavers and the clang of the shuttles, insomuch that poor Sandro was deafened with it, but likewise produced such a trembling and shaking throughout the house, which was none too solidly built, that the painter, what with one and the other, could no more continue his work, nor even remain in the house. He had frequently requested his neighbour to put an end to this disturbance, but the latter had replied that he both could and would do what he pleased in his own house. Being angered by this, Sandro had an enormous mass of stone of great weight, and more than would fill a waggon, placed in exact equilibrium on the wall of his own dwelling, which was higher than that of his neighbour, and not a very strong one; this stone threatened to fall at the slightest shake given to the wall, when it must have crushed the roof, floors, frames, and workmen of the weaver to atoms. The man, terrified at the danger, hastened to Sandro, from whom he received back his own reply in his own words—namely, that he both could and would do what he pleased in his own house; whereupon, not being able to obtain any other answer, he was compelled to come to reasonable terms, and to make the painter a less troublesome neighbour.

We find it further related that Sandro Botticelli once went to the vicar of his parish, and, in jest, accused a friend of his own of heresy. The person inculpated having appeared, demanded to know by whom he was accused and of what. Being told that



Sandro had declared him to hold the opinion of the Epicureans—to wit, that the soul dies with the body, he required that his accuser should be confronted with him before the judge. Sandro was summoned accordingly, when the accused man exclaimed, “It is true that I hold the opinion stated respecting the soul of this man, who is a blockhead; nay, does he not appear to you to be a heretic also; for, without a grain of learning, scarcely knowing how to read, has he not undertaken to make a commentary on Dante, and does he not take his name in vain?”

This master is said to have had an extraordinary love for those whom he knew to be zealous students in art, and is affirmed to have gained considerable sums of money; but being a bad manager and very careless, all came to nothing. Finally, having become old, unfit for work, and helpless, he was obliged to go on crutches, being unable to stand upright, and so died, after long illness and decrepitude, in his seventy-eighth year. He was buried at Florence, in the church of Ognissanti, in the year 1515.

## NANNI GROSSO.

THE sculptor Nanni Grosso, a friend and disciple of Verrochio, was a very eccentric person, and peculiar in the exercise of his art, as well as in his life. It is related of this artist that he would never undertake any work out of his workshop, more particularly for monks or friars, but on condition that the door of the cellar, or whatever place the wine was kept in, should be left constantly open, that he might go to drink whenever he pleased, without asking leave from any one. It is also said, that having once returned from the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, perfectly cured of some illness, I know not what, his reply to his friends when they came to visit and congratulate him was, "I am very ill." "Ill!" they replied; "nay, you are perfectly cured." "And that is precisely wherefore I am ill," rejoined Nanni, "for I am in want of a little fever, that I might remain in the hospital, well attended and at my ease." When this artist was at the point of death, which happened in the hospital aforesaid, they placed a wooden crucifix before him, which was clumsy and ill-executed, when he implored them to take it out of his sight and bring him one by Donato, declaring that if they did not take that one from before him he should die despairing, so greatly did the sight of ill-executed works in his own art displease him.

## PIETRO PERUGINO.

[BORN 1446--DIED 1523.]

THIS artist, seeking to escape from the extreme of penury in Perugia, departed to Florence, hoping, by means of his abilities, to attain to some distinction. He there remained many months without even a bed to lie on, and miserably took his sleep upon a chest; but, turning night into day, and labouring without intermission, he devoted himself most fervently to the study of his profession. Continual labour thus became the habit of his life: he knew no other pleasure than that of toiling incessantly in his vocation, and, therefore, painted perpetually.

Having the prospect and terrors of poverty constantly before his eyes, Pietro undertook works for gain, on which he would probably not have cast his eyes if he had possessed wherewith to support himself; but it is very possible that riches would have closed the path to eminence offered by his talents, as effectually as it was opened to him by poverty and by the impulse received from his need, for he was thereby impelled to struggle, that he might escape from so wretched and debased a condition, and, at least, secure the means of life, if he might not hope to attain to the highest eminence. With this in view he did not permit himself to regard cold, hunger, fatigue, or privation of any kind, nor was he ashamed to perform any work that might help to promote his object, which was to obtain the power of some day living in ease and quietness. It was his wont to say, and almost in the manner of a proverb, that after bad weather the good must come; and that when it is fair

weather, a man must build his house, that he may thus be under shelter when he most needs it.

This child, brought up in penury and want, was given by his father to be the shop-drudge of a painter in Perugia, who was not particularly distinguished in his calling, but held the art in great veneration and highly honoured the men who excelled therein; nor did he ever cease to set before Pietro the great advantages and honours that were to be obtained from painting, by all who acquired the power of labouring in it effectually; recounting to him all the rewards bestowed on the various masters, ancient and modern, thereby encouraging Pietro to the study of his art: insomuch that he kindled in the mind of the latter the desire to become one of those masters, as he resolved, if fortune were propitious to him, that he would do. The boy would thus often inquire of such persons as he knew to have seen the world, in what city the best artists were formed? This question he addressed more particularly to his instructor, from whom he constantly received the same reply, namely, that Florence was the place, above all others, wherein men attain to perfection in all the arts, but more especially in painting. And to this, he said, they were impelled by three causes: first, by the censure freely expressed by so many persons and in such various modes, for the air of that city gives a natural quickness and freedom to the perceptions of men, so that they cannot content themselves with mediocrity in the works presented to them, which they always judge with reference to the honour of the good and beautiful in art, rather than with respect to, or consideration for, the man who has produced them: next, that, to obtain the means of life in Florence, a man must be industrious, which is as much as to say that he must keep his skill and judgment in perpetual activity, must be ever ready and rapid in his proceedings; must know, in short, how to gain money, seeing that Florence, not having a rich and abundant domain around her, cannot supply the means of life to those who abide within her walls, at light cost, as can be done in countries where produce abounds largely. The third cause, which is, perhaps, not less effectual than the other two, is the



desire for glory and honour, which is powerfully generated by the air of that place, in the men of every profession, and whereby all who possess talent are impelled to struggle, that they may not remain in the same grade with those whom they perceive to be only men like themselves (much less will any consent to remain behind another), even though they may acknowledge such to be indeed Masters; but all labour by every means to be foremost, insomuch that some desire their own exaltation so eagerly as to become thankless for benefits, censorious of their competitors, and, in many ways, evil-minded, unless that effect be prevented by natural excellence and sense of justice. It is, however, true that when a man has acquired sufficient for his purposes in Florence, if he wish to effect more than merely to live from day to day, as do the beasts that perish, and desire to become rich, he must depart from her boundaries and seek another market for the excellence of his works and for the reputation conferred by that city; as the learned derive profit from the renown obtained by their studies. For the city of Florence treats her artists as Time treats his works, which, having perfected, he destroys, and, by little and little, gradually consumes.

Influenced by these counsels, therefore, and moved by the persuasions of various persons, Pietro repaired to Florence with the determination to attain excellence, and in this he succeeded well, for, at that time, works in his manner were held in the highest esteem. In a few years Pietro attained to such a height of reputation, that his works were dispersed, not only through Florence and all over Italy, but in France, Spain, and other countries, whither they had been despatched. His paintings being thus held in high estimation, and bearing a very great price, the merchants began to make purchases of them and to send them into different lands, to their great gain and advantage.

The works of Pietro being much extolled by the Florentines, as we have said, a prior of the same convent of the Ingesuati, who took great pleasure in the art, commissioned him to paint a Nativity on the walls of the first cloister, with the Adoration .

of the Magi, the figures extremely small, and this work he conducted to perfection with much grace and elegance. The Prior of this cloister, as I have been told, was very successful in the preparation of ultra-marine blues, and having them, from this circumstance, in good store, he therefore desired that Pietro should use them frequently in all the above-mentioned works; he was nevertheless so mean and mistrustful that he dared not confide the colour to Pietro, but would always be present when the latter was using the azure blue. The master therefore, who was by nature upright and honest, nor in any way covetous of another man's goods, took the distrust of the Prior very ill, and determined to make him ashamed of it. He accordingly placed a bowl of water beside him whenever he had prepared draperies or other parts of the picture to be painted in blue and white, calling every now and then on the Prior (who turned grudgingly to his little bag of the colour) to put ultra-marine into the vase or bottle wherein it was tempered with water; then setting to work, at every second pencil-full he washed his brush into the bowl beside him, wherein there remained by this means more colour than the painter had bestowed on his work. The Prior, finding his bag becoming empty, while the work made but little show, cried out once and again, time after time—"Oh, what a quantity of ultra-marine is swallowed up by this plaster!" "You see for yourself how it is," replied Pietro, and the Prior went away. When he was gone the master gathered the ultra-marine from the bottom of the bowl, and when he thought the proper time for doing so was come, he returned it to the Prior, saying to him—"This belongs to you, father; learn to trust honest men, for such never deceive those who confide in them, although they well know how to circumvent distrustful persons like yourself when they desire to do so."

Pietro had worked so much, and received such perpetual demands for his works, that he frequently used one and the same object or figure several times in different pictures, his theory and mode of treatment in art had, indeed, become so mannered that he gave all his figures the same expression. Now Michelagnolo was by this time coming forward to his

place, and Pietro earnestly desired to see his works, because of the great praise bestowed on them by the artists, but as he perceived that the greatness of the name which he had himself acquired in all places began to be obscured by others, he sought much to lower and mortify all who were then labouring to distinguish themselves by the caustic severity of his remarks. This caused him to receive various offences from different artists, and Michelagnolo told him publicly that he was but a dolt and blockhead in art. But Pietro could not endure so grievous an affront, and the two artists presented themselves before the Council of Eight, whence Pietro withdrew, however, with very little honour. Meanwhile the Servite Monks of Florence desired to have the picture for their high altar painted by some master of great renown, and had given the commission for it to Filippo Lippi on account of the departure of Leonardo da Vinci to France, but the former, when he had completed the half of one out of the two pictures of which the altar-piece was to be composed, departed to another life; whereupon the monks, moved by the faith they had placed in Pietro, confided the whole work to his care. I find it related that when the painting was first uncovered all the new artists censured it greatly, principally because Pietro had again adopted the same figures that had been previously painted in other of his works, for which his friends reproached him not a little, declaring that he had taken no pains, but whether induced by avarice, or by the desire to spare his time, had departed from his usual good manner; to all which Pietro replied, "I have painted in this work the figures that you formerly commanded, and which then pleased you greatly; if they now displease you, and you no longer extol them, what can I do?" This did not prevent many from assailing him sharply with satirical verses, and offending him publicly in various ways; wherefore, having now become old, he left Florence altogether, and returned to Perugia.

It was the custom of Pietro, who was a man who did not confide in any one, when going or returning from the Castello to Perugia, to carry all the money which he possessed at the time about his person; this being known, certain men waylaid

him at a place on the road, and robbed him of all that he had, but, at his earnest entreaty, they spared his life for the love of God. By means of the measures adopted, and the assistance of his friends, of whom he had a good number, notwithstanding what has been said, he recovered a great part of the money that had been taken from him; he was nevertheless very near dying of grief for this misfortune. Pietro possessed but very little religion, and could never be made to believe in the immortality of the soul—nay, most obstinately did he reject all good counsel, with words suited to the stubbornness of his marble-hard brain. He placed all his hopes in the goods of fortune, and would have undertaken anything for money; he gained great riches indeed, and bought, as well as built, several large houses in Florence; at Perugia also, and at Castello della Pieve, he bought a considerable amount of property. Pietro took a very beautiful girl to wife, and she bore him children; he is said to have had so much pleasure in seeing her wear becoming head-dresses, both abroad and at home, that he was occasionally known to arrange this part of her toilet with his own hands. Finally, having attained to the age of seventy-eight, Pietro finished the course of his life in the Castello della Pieve, where he was honourably buried in the year 1524.



## LUCA SIGNORELLI

[BORN ABOUT 1441—DIED 1523.]

THE excellent painter, Luca Signorelli, was, in his day, most highly renowned through all Italy, and his works were held in more esteem than those of any other master have been at any time, seeing that in his paintings he showed the true mode of depicting the nude form, and proved that it can be made, although not without consummate art and much difficulty, to appear as does the actual life. Nor am I surprised that the works of Luca were ever highly extolled by Michelagnolo, or that for his divine work of the Last Judgment, painted in the chapel, he should have courteously availed himself, to a certain extent, of the inventions of that artist.

It is related of Luca Signorelli that he had a son killed in Cortona, a youth of singular beauty in face and person, whom he had tenderly loved. In his deep grief, the father caused his child to be despoiled of his clothing, and, with extraordinary constancy of soul, uttering no complaint and shedding no tear, he painted the portrait of his dead child, to the end that he might still have the power of contemplating, by means of the work of his own hands, that which nature had given him, but which an adverse fortune had taken away.

Having executed works for almost all the princes of Italy, and having become old, Luca Signorelli returned to Cortona, where, in his last years, he worked for his pleasure rather than from any other motive, and because, having ever been accustomed to labour, he could not prevail on himself to live in idleness. In this his old age then he painted a picture for the

Nuns of Santa Marghereta, in Arezzo, and one for the brotherhood of San Girolamo, the last being partly at the cost of Messer Niccolo Gamurrini, doctor of laws and auditor of the Ruota, whose portrait, taken from the life, is in the picture; he is kneeling before the Madonna, to whose protection he is recommended by San Niccolo, who is also depicted in the same painting. This work was transported from Cortona to Arezzo by the members of that brotherhood, who bore it on their shoulders from the first-named city to the last, when Luca also, old as he was, determined on repairing to Arezzo, to see the picture in its place, and also that he might visit his kindred and friends. During his stay in Arezzo his abode was in the "Casa Vasari," where I was then a little child of eight years old, and I remember that the good old man, who was exceedingly courteous and agreeable, having heard from the master who was teaching me my first lessons that I attended to nothing in school but drawing figures, turned round to Antonio, my father, and said to him, "Antonio, let Georgino by all means learn to draw, that he may not degenerate, for even though he should hereafter devote himself to learning, yet the knowledge of design, if not profitable, cannot fail to be honourable and advantageous." Then turning to me, who was standing immediately before him, he said, "Study well, little kinsman." He said many other things respecting me which I refrain from repeating, because I know that I have been far from justifying the opinion which that good old man had of me. Being told that I suffered, as was the case at that age, so severely from bleeding at the nose as sometimes to be left fainting and half-dead thereby, he bound a jasper round my neck with his own hand, and with infinite tenderness: this recollection of Luca will never depart while I live. Having placed his picture in its destined position, Luca returned to Cortona, being accompanied to a considerable distance on his road by many of the citizens, as well as by his friends and relations, and this was an honour well merited by the excellences and endowments of this master, who always lived rather in the manner of a noble and a gentleman than in that of a painter.

When the Cardinal of Cortona desired to have a picture from the hand of Luca, the latter, although very old and afflicted with palsy, depicted the Baptism of Christ by St. John, in fresco, on the wall of the palace chapel, on that side namely whereon the altar stands; but he could not entirely finish it, seeing that while still working at this picture he died, having attained the eighty-second year of his age.

Luca Signorelli was a man of the most upright life, sincere in all things, affectionate to his friends, mild and amiable in his dealings with all, most especially courteous to every one who desired his works, and very efficient as well as kind in the instruction of his disciples. He lived very splendidly, took much pleasure in clothing himself in handsome vestments,<sup>1</sup> and was always held in the highest esteem for his many good qualities, both in his own country and in others.

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of Vasari we have, "he lived splendidly, and always dressed in silk."

LEONARDO DA VINCI.<sup>1</sup>

[BORN 1452—DIED 1519.]

THE richest gifts are seen to be showered by celestial influence on certain human beings, sometimes supernaturally and marvellously congregating in one sole person; beauty, grace, and talent being united in such a manner, that to whatever such a man may turn, his every action is so divine as to leave all other men far behind him, and manifestly to prove that he has been endowed by God, and not by human teaching. This was seen in Leonardo da Vinci, in whom, besides his beauty of person, which has never been sufficiently extolled, there was more than infinite grace in all his actions, and who had besides so rare ability, that to whatever subject he turned, however difficult, he easily made himself absolute master of it. Extraordinary power was in his case conjoined with remarkable facility, a mind of regal boldness and magnanimous daring; his fame extended so widely that he was held in high estimation, not in his own time only, but also to a greater extent after his death.

Truly admirable, and divinely endowed was Leonardo, the son of Ser Piero da Vinci;<sup>2</sup> he would without doubt have made great

<sup>1</sup> Vinci is a small castle in the lower Valdarno, near the lake Fucecchio.

<sup>2</sup> Leonardo was born in 1452, and not earlier, as some of his biographers assert. He was the natural son of Ser Piero, notary to the Signoria of Florence, but is believed to have been legitimised by his father in his early youth. His mother was one Caterina, afterwards married to Accattabriga, also of Vinci.



progress in learning and knowledge of the sciences, had he not been so versatile and changeful, but the instability of his character caused him to undertake many things which, having commenced, he afterwards abandoned. In arithmetic, for example, he made such rapid progress in the short time during which he gave his attention to it, that he often confounded the master who was teaching him, by the perpetual doubts he started, and by the difficulty of the questions he proposed. He also commenced the study of music, and resolved to acquire the art of playing the lute, when, being by nature of an exalted imagination and full of the most graceful vivacity, he sang to that instrument most divinely, improvising at once the verses and the music.

But, though dividing his attention among pursuits so varied, he never abandoned drawing and working in relief, that being the occupation which attracted him more than any other. Ser Piero, observing this, and considering the extraordinary character of his son's genius, one day took some of his drawings to Andrea del Verrocchio, who was a very intimate friend of his, begging him earnestly to tell him whether he thought that Leonardo would be likely to secure success if he devoted himself to drawing. Andrea was amazed to see the remarkable commencement made by Leonardo, and advised Ser Piero to see that he attached himself to that calling, whereupon the latter took his measures accordingly, and sent Leonardo to study in the bottega or workshop of Andrea. Thither the boy resorted with readiness, and not only gave his attention to one branch of art, but to all the others, of which design made a portion. Endowed with such admirable intelligence, and being also an excellent geometrician, Leonardo not only worked in sculpture (having executed certain heads in terra-cotta, of women smiling, even in his first youth, which are now reproduced in gypsum, and also others of children which might be supposed to have proceeded from the hand of a master); but in architecture likewise he prepared various designs for ground-plans, and the construction of entire buildings: he too it was who, though still but a youth, first suggested the formation of a canal from Pisa to Florence, by means of certain changes to be effected on the

river Arno.<sup>1</sup> He likewise made designs for mills, fulling machines, and other engines, which were to be acted on by means of water; but as he had resolved to make painting his profession, he gave the larger portion of time to drawing from nature. He sometimes formed models of different figures in clay, on which he would arrange fragments of soft drapery dipped in plaster; from these he would then set himself patiently to draw on very fine cambric or linen that had already been used and rendered smooth, these he executed in black and white with the point of the pencil in a most admirable manner, as may be seen by certain specimens from his own hand which I have in my book of drawings. He drew on paper also with so much care and so perfectly, that no one has ever equalled him in this respect: I have a head by him in *chiaroscuro*, which is divine. Leonardo was indeed so imbued with power and grace by the hand of God, and was endowed with so marvellous a facility in reproducing his conceptions, his memory also was always so ready in the service of his intellect, that he won all men by his discourse, and the force of his arguments.

This master was also frequently occupied with the construction of models and the preparation of designs for the removal or the perforation of mountains, to the end that they might thus be easily passed from one plain to another. By means of levers, cranes, and screws, he likewise showed how great weights might be raised or drawn; in what manner ports and havens might be cleansed and kept in order, and how water might be obtained from the lowest deeps. From speculations of this kind he never gave himself rest, and of the results of these labours and meditations there are numberless examples in drawings, and I have myself seen many.<sup>2</sup> Besides all this he wasted not a

<sup>1</sup> This magnificent work was executed about 200 years after, by Vincenzo Viviani, a disciple of Galileo.—BOTTARI.

<sup>2</sup> There were thirteen folio volumes of Leonardo's writings and drawings in the Ambrosian Library (Milan), but these were taken to Paris; and one only, the *Codex Atlanticus*, which treats principally of mechanics, has been returned. It was Leonardo's custom to write from right to left.

little time, to the degree of even designing a series of cords, curiously intertwined, but of which any separate strand may be distinguished from one end to the other, the whole forming a complete circle; a very curiously complicated and exceedingly difficult specimen of these coils may be seen engraved; in the midst of it are the following words:—*Leonardus Vinci Academia*. Among these models and drawings there is one, by means of which Leonardo often sought to prove to the different citizens—many of them men of great discernment—who then governed Florence, that the church of San Giovanni in that city could be raised, and steps placed beneath it, without injury to the edifice: he supported his assertions with reasons so persuasive, that while he spoke the undertaking seemed feasible, although every one of his hearers, when he had departed, could see for himself that such a thing was impossible. In conversation Leonardo was so pleasing that he won the hearts of all, and though possessing so small a patrimony only that it might almost be called nothing, while he yet worked very little, he still constantly kept many servants and horses, taking extraordinary delight in the latter: he was indeed fond of all animals, ever treating them with infinite kindness and consideration; as a proof of this it is related, that when he passed places where birds were sold, he would frequently take them from their cages, and having paid the price demanded for them by the sellers, would then let them fly into the air, thus restoring to them the liberty they had lost. Leonardo was so highly favoured by nature, that to whatever he turned his thoughts, mind, and spirit, he gave proof in all of such admirable power and perfection, that whatever he did bore an impress of harmony, truthfulness, goodness, sweetness, and grace, wherein no other man could ever equal him.

Leonardo, with his profound intelligence of art, began various things which he never completed, because it appeared to him that the hand could never give due perfection to the thoughts in his imagination; seeing that in his mind he frequently formed the idea of some difficult enterprise, so subtle and so wonderful that, by means of hands, however excellent or able, it could never be realised. His tastes were so various that, philosophising



over natural objects, he set himself to investigate the properties of plants, to make observations on the heavenly bodies, to follow the variations of the moon, and the course of the sun.

Having been placed then by Ser Piero in his childhood with Andrea Verrocchio, as I have said, to learn the art of the painter, that master was engaged on a picture, San Giovanni baptising Jesus Christ; in this Leonardo painted an angel holding some vestments; and although he was but a youth, he completed that figure in such a manner, that the angel of Leonardo was much better than the portion executed by his master, which caused the latter never to touch colours more,<sup>1</sup> so much was he displeased to find that a mere child could do more than himself.

It is related that Ser Piero da Vinci, being at his country house, was there visited by one of the peasants on his estate, who, having cut down a fig-tree on his farm, had made a shield from part of it with his own hands, and then brought it to Ser Piero, begging that he would be pleased to cause the same to be painted for him in Florence. This the latter very willingly promised to do, the countryman having great skill in taking birds and in fishing, and being often very serviceable to Ser Piero in such matters. Having taken the shield with him to Florence therefore, without saying anything to Leonardo as to whom it was for, he desired the latter to paint something upon it. Accordingly, he one day took it in hand, but finding it crooked, coarse, and badly made, he straightened it at the fire, and giving it to a turner, it was brought back to him smooth and delicately rounded, instead of the rude and shapeless form in which he had received it. He then covered it with gypsum, and having prepared it to his liking, he began to consider what he could paint upon it that might best and most effectually terrify whomsoever might approach it, producing the same effect with that formerly attributed to the head of Medusa. For this purpose, therefore, Leonardo carried to one of his rooms, into which no one but himself ever entered, a number of lizards,

<sup>1</sup> This picture is now at Florence in the Academy of Fine Arts.



hedgehogs, newts, serpents, dragon-flies, locusts, bats, glow-worms, and every other sort of strange animal of similar kind on which he could lay his hands; from this assemblage, variously adapted and joined together, he formed a hideous and appalling monster, breathing poison and flames, and surrounded by an atmosphere of fire; this he caused to issue from a dark and rifted rock, with poison reeking from the cavernous throat, flames darting from the eyes, and vapours rising from the nostrils in such sort that the result was indeed a most fearful and monstrous creature: at this he laboured until the odours arising from all those dead animals filled the room with a deadly fetor, to which Leonardo's love to art rendered him insensible. When this work, which neither the countryman nor Ser Piero any longer inquired for, was completed, Leonardo went to his father and told him that he might send for the shield at his earliest convenience, since so far as he was concerned the work was finished; Ser Piero went accordingly one morning to the room for the shield, and having knocked at the door, Leonardo opened it to him, telling him nevertheless to wait a little without, and having returned into the room he placed the shield on the easel, and shading the window so that the light falling on the painting was somewhat dimmed, he made Ser Piero step within to look at it. But the latter, not expecting any such thing, drew back, startled at the first glance, not supposing that to be the shield, or believing the monster he beheld to be a painting, he therefore turned to rush out, but Leonardo withheld him, saying:—"The shield will serve the purpose for which it has been executed, take it therefore and carry it away, for this is the effect it was designed to produce." The work seemed something more than wonderful to Ser Piero, and he highly commended the fanciful idea of Leonardo, but he afterwards silently bought from a merchant another shield, whereon there was painted a heart transfix'd with an arrow, and this he gave to the countryman, who considered himself obliged to him for it to the end of his life.

It is worthy of admiration that this great genius, desiring to give the utmost possible relief to the works executed by him,

laboured constantly, not content with his darkest shadows, to discover the ground tone of others still darker; thus he sought a black that should produce a deeper shadow, and be yet darker than all other known blacks, to the end that the lights might by these means be rendered still more lucid, until he finally produced that totally dark shade, in which there is absolutely no light left, and objects have more the appearance of things seen by night, than the clearness of forms perceived by the light of day, but all this was done with the purpose of giving greater relief, and of discovering and attaining to the ultimate perfection of art.

Leonardo was so much pleased when he encountered faces of extraordinary character, or heads, beards, or hair of unusual appearance, that he would follow any such, more than commonly attractive, through the whole day, until the figure of the person would become so well impressed on his mind that, having returned home, he would draw him as readily as though he stood before him. Of heads thus obtained there exist many, both masculine and feminine; and I have myself several of them drawn with a pen by his own hand, in the book of drawings so frequently cited.<sup>1</sup>

On the death of Giovanni Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, in the year 1493, Ludovico Sforza was chosen in the same year to be his successor, when Leonardo was invited with great honour to Milan by the Duke, who delighted greatly in the music of the lute, to the end that the master might play before him;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lomazzo, *Trattatto della Pittura*, relates that he was himself present at a supper to which Leonardo had invited a number of peasants, whom he diverted by stories which made them laugh immoderately, and display the most extravagant contortions; the artist then withdrew, and reproduced the faces thus distorted, with an effect so irresistibly comic that none could look at them without laughter.

<sup>2</sup> Richter believes Leonardo went to Milan about 1487. But he left Florence about 1482, and some of his extant letters show that he stayed in the mountains of Armenia. See J. P. Richter, *Literary Works of Leonardo*. London, 1883, vol. ii. p. 387.

Leonardo therefore took with him a certain instrument which he had himself constructed almost wholly of silver, and in the shape of a horse's head, a new and fanciful form calculated to give more force and sweetness to the sound. Here Leonardo surpassed all the musicians who had assembled to perform before the Duke; he was besides one of the best *improvisatori* in verse existing at that time, and the Duke, enchanted with the admirable conversation of Leonardo, was so charmed by his varied gifts that he delighted beyond measure in his society, and prevailed on him to paint an altar-piece, the subject of which was the Nativity of Christ, which was sent by the Duke as a present to the Emperor. For the Dominican monks of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Milan, he also painted a Last Supper, which is a most beautiful and admirable work; to the heads of the Apostles in this picture the master gave so much beauty and majesty that he was constrained to leave that of Christ unfinished, being convinced that he could not impart to it the divinity which should distinguish an image of Christ.<sup>1</sup> The whole work indeed is executed with inexpressible diligence even in its most minute part, among other things may be mentioned the table-cloth, the texture of which is copied with such exactitude, that the linen-cloth itself could scarcely look more real.<sup>2</sup>

It is related that the Prior of the Monastery was excessively importunate in pressing Leonardo to complete the picture; he could in no way comprehend wherefore the artist should sometimes remain half a day together absorbed in thought before his work, without making any progress that he could see; this seemed to him a strange waste of time, and he would fain have had him work away as he could make the men do who were digging in his garden, never laying the pencil out of his hand. Not content with seeking to hasten Leonardo, the Prior even

<sup>1</sup> This head, on the contrary, seems admirably finished, notwithstanding the ruined condition of the work to-day.

<sup>2</sup> The best copy of this work (which in the original has mostly disappeared) is that by Leonardo's pupil Marco d'Oggione, and is in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, London.

complained to the Duke, and tormented him to such a degree that the latter was at length compelled to send for Leonardo, whom he courteously entreated to let the work be finished, assuring him nevertheless that he did so because impelled by the importunities of the Prior. Leonardo, knowing the Prince to be intelligent and judicious, determined to explain himself fully on the subject with him, although he had never chosen to do so with the Prior. He therefore discoursed with him at some length respecting art, and made it perfectly manifest to his comprehension that men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem to be labouring least, their minds being occupied in invention, and in the completion of those conceptions to which they afterwards give form and expression with the hand. He further informed the Duke that there were still wanting to him two heads, one of which, that of Christ, he could not hope to find on earth, and had not yet attained the power of presenting it to himself in imagination, with all that perfection of beauty and celestial grace demanded for the representation of Divinity incarnate. The second head still wanting was that of Judas, which also caused him some anxiety, since he did not think it possible to imagine a form of feature that should properly render the countenance of a man who, after so many benefits received from his master, had possessed a heart so depraved as to be capable of betraying his Lord and the Creator of the world; with regard to that second, however, he would make search, and, after all, if he could find no better, there would always be the head of that troublesome and impertinent Prior. This made the Duke laugh with all his heart; he declared Leonardo to be completely in the right, and the poor Prior, in confusion, went away to drive on the digging in his garden, and left Leonardo in peace.

While still engaged with the paintings of the refectory, Leonardo proposed to the Duke to cast a horse in bronze of colossal size, and to place on it a figure of the Duke, by way of monument to his memory: this he commenced, but finished the model on so large a scale that it never could be completed, and there were many ready to declare (for the judgments of men are



various, and are sometimes rendered malignant by envy) that Leonardo had begun it; as he did others of his labours, without intending ever to finish it. The size of the work being such, insuperable difficulties presented themselves, as I have said, when it came to be cast; the casting could not be effected in one piece, and it is very probable that, when this result was known, many were led to form the opinion alluded to above, from the fact that so many of Leonardo's works had failed to receive completion. But of a truth, there is good reason to believe that the very greatness of his most exalted mind, aiming at more than could be effected, was itself an impediment; perpetually seeking to add excellence to excellence, and perfection to perfection; this was, without doubt, the true hindrance, so that, as our Petrarch has it, the work was retarded by desire. All who saw the large model in clay which Leonardo made for this work, declared that they had never seen anything more beautiful or more majestic; this model remained as he had left it until the French, with their King Louis, came to Milan, when they destroyed it totally. A small model of the same work, executed in wax, and which was considered perfect, was also lost, with a book containing studies of the anatomy of the horse, which Leonardo had prepared for his own use. He afterwards gave his attention, and with increased earnestness, to the anatomy of the human frame, a study wherein Messer Marcantonio della Torre,<sup>1</sup> an eminent philosopher, and himself, did mutually assist and encourage each other. Messer Marcantonio was at that time holding lectures in Pavia, and wrote on the same subject; he was one of the first, as I have heard say, who began to apply the doctrines of Galen to the elucidation of medical science, and to diffuse light over the science of anatomy, which, up to that time, had been involved in the almost total darkness of ignorance. In this attempt Marcantonio was wonderfully aided by the genius and labour of Leonardo, who filled a book with drawings in red crayons, outlined with the pen, all copies

<sup>1</sup> A celebrated anatomist, of Padua and afterwards Pavia, who died in his thirtieth year,

made with the utmost care from bodies dissected by his own hand. In this book he set forth the entire structure, arrangement, and disposition of the bones, to which he afterwards added all the nerves, in their due order, and next supplied the muscles, of which the first are affixed to the bones, the second give the power of cohesion or holding firmly, and the third impart that of motion. Of each separate part he wrote an explanation in rude characters, written backwards and with the left hand, so that whoever is not practised in reading cannot understand them, since they are only to be read with a mirror. Of these anatomical drawings of the human form, a great part is now in the possession of Messer Francesco da Melzo, a Milanese gentleman, who, in the time of Leonardo, was a child of remarkable beauty, much beloved by him, and is now a handsome and amiable old man, who sets great store by these drawings, and treasures them as relics, together with the portrait of Leonardo of blessed memory.<sup>1</sup>

For Francesco del Giocondo, Leonardo undertook to paint the portrait of Mona Lisa, his wife, but, after loitering over it for four years, he finally left it unfinished. This work is now in the possession of the King Francis of France, and is at Fontainebleau. Whoever shall desire to see how far art can imitate nature may do so to perfection in this head, wherein every peculiarity that could be depicted by the utmost subtlety of the pencil has been faithfully reproduced. The eyes have the lustrous brightness and moisture which is seen in life, and around them are those pale, red, and slightly livid circles, also proper to nature, with the lashes, which can only be copied, as these are, with the greatest difficulty; the eyebrows also are represented with the closest exactitude, where fuller and where more

<sup>1</sup> The different portraits said to represent Leonardo are very unlike each other. The drawings showing the head in profile (at Windsor Castle and elsewhere) seem to be a pupil's work from memory. The picture in the Uffizi is probably by an artist of the middle of the sixteenth century, and is very unlike the original drawing at Turin.

thinly set, with the separate hairs delineated as they issue from the skin, every turn being followed, and all the pores exhibited in a manner that could not be more natural than it is: the nose, with its beautiful and delicately roseate nostrils, might be easily believed to be alive; the mouth, admirable in its outline, has the lips uniting the rose-tints of their colour with that of the face, in the utmost perfection, and the carnation of the cheek does not appear to be painted, but truly of flesh and blood: he who looks earnestly at the pit of the throat cannot but believe that he sees the beating of the pulses, and it may be truly said that this work is painted in a manner well calculated to make the boldest master tremble, and astonishes all who behold it, however well accustomed to the marvels of art. *Mona Lisa* was exceedingly beautiful, and while Leonardo was painting her portrait, he took the precaution of keeping some one constantly near her, to sing or play on instruments, or to jest and otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might continue cheerful, and so that her face might not exhibit the melancholy expression often imparted by painters to the likenesses they take. In this portrait of Leonardo's, on the contrary, there is so pleasing an expression, and a smile so sweet, that while looking at it one thinks it rather divine than human, and it has ever been esteemed a wonderful work, since life itself could exhibit no other appearance.

Leonardo da Vinci was a man of very high spirit, and was very generous in all his actions: it is related of him that, having once gone to the bank to receive the salary which Piero Soderini caused to be paid to him every month, the cashier was about to give him certain paper packets of pence, but Leonardo refused to receive them, remarking at the same time, "I am no pennypainter." Not completing the picture, he was charged with having deceived Piero Soderini, and was reproached accordingly; when Leonardo so wrought with his friends, that they collected the sums which he had received and took the money to Piero Soderini with offers of restoration, but Piero would not accept them.

On the exaltation of Pope Leo X. to the chair of St. Peter,

Leonardo accompanied the Duke Giuliano de' Medici to Rome: the Pontiff was much inclined to philosophical inquiry, and was more especially addicted to the study of alchemy: Leonardo, therefore, having composed a kind of paste from wax, made of this, while it was still in its half-liquid state, certain figures of animals, entirely hollow and exceedingly slight in texture, which he then filled with air. When he blew into these figures he could make them fly through the air, but when the air within had escaped from them they fell to the earth. One day the vine-dresser of the Belvedere found a very curious lizard, and for this creature Leonardo constructed wings, made from the skins of other lizards, flayed for the purpose; into these wings he put quick-silver, so that when the animal walked, the wings moved also, with a tremulous motion; he then made eyes, horns, and a beard for the creature, which he tamed and kept in a case; he would then show it to the friends who came to visit him, and all who saw it ran away terrified. He more than once, likewise, caused the intestines of a sheep to be cleansed and scraped until they were brought into such a state of tenuity that they could be held within the hollow of the hand, having then placed in a neighbouring chamber a pair of blacksmith's bellows, to which he had made fast one end of the intestines, he would blow into them until he caused them to fill the whole room, which was a very large one, insomuch that whoever might be therein was compelled to take refuge in a corner: he thus showed them transparent and full of wind, remarking that, whereas they had previously been contained within a small compass, they were now filling all space, and this, he would say, was a fit emblem of talent or genius. He made numbers of these follies in various kinds, occupied himself much with mirrors and optical instruments, and made the most singular experiments in seeking oils for painting, and varnishes to preserve the work when executed. It is related that Leonardo, having received a commission for a certain picture from Pope Leo, immediately began to distil oils and herbs for the varnish, whereupon the pontiff remarked, "Alas! the while, this man will assuredly do nothing at all, since he is thinking of the end



before he has made a beginning to his work." There was perpetual discord between Michelagnolo Buonarroto and Leonardo, and the competition between them caused Michelagnolo to leave Florence, the Duke Giuliano framing an excuse for him, the pretext for his departure being that he was summoned to Rome by the Pope for the façade of San Lorenzo. When Leonardo heard of this, he also departed and went to France, where the king, already possessing several of his works, was most kindly disposed towards him, and wished him to paint the cartoon of Sant' Anna, but Leonardo, according to his custom, kept the king a long time waiting with nothing better than words. Finally, having become old, he lay sick for many months, and, finding himself near death, wrought diligently to make himself acquainted with the Catholic ritual, and with the good and holy path of the Christian religion: he then confessed with great penitence and many tears, and although he could not support himself on his feet, yet, being sustained in the arms of his servants and friends, he devoutly received the Holy Sacrament, while thus out of his bed. The king, who was accustomed frequently and affectionately to visit him, came immediately afterwards to his room, and he, causing himself out of reverence to be raised up, sat in his bed describing his malady and the different circumstances connected with it, lamenting, besides, that he had offended God and man, inasmuch as that he had not laboured in art as he ought to have done. He was then seized with a violent paroxysm, the forerunner of death, when the king, rising and supporting his head to give him such assistance and do him such favour as he could, in the hope of alleviating his sufferings, the spirit of Leonardo, which was most divine, conscious that he could attain to no greater honour, departed in the arms of the monarch, being at that time in the seventy-fifth<sup>1</sup> year of his age.

The death of Leonardo caused great sorrow to all who had

<sup>1</sup> Or rather in his sixty-seventh year. The story of dying in the king's arms is not now accepted.

known him, nor was there ever an artist who did more honour to the art of painting. The radiance of his countenance, which was splendidly beautiful, brought cheerfulness to the heart of the most melancholy, and the power of his word could move the most obstinate to say, "No," or "Yes," as he desired. He possessed so great a degree of physical strength, that he was capable of restraining the most impetuous violence, and was able to bend one of the iron rings used for the knockers of doors, or a horse-shoe, as if it were lead; with the generous liberality of his nature, he extended shelter and hospitality to every friend, rich or poor, provided only that he were distinguished by talent or excellence; the poorest and most insignificant abode was rendered beautiful and honourable by his works; and as the city of Florence received a great gift in the birth of Leonardo, so did it suffer a more than grievous loss at his death.

## PIERO DI COSIMO.

[BORN 1441—DIED 1521.]

THE father of Piero, perceiving a lively genius, and a strong inclination to the art of design in his son, entrusted him to the care of Cosimo Rosselli, who accepted the charge more than willingly, and seeing him make progress beyond most of the other disciples whom he had under his care, he bore to him the love of a father, and as his acquirements in art increased with his years, he constantly treated him as such.

Piero had received from nature a mind of considerable elevation, he was of a peculiar and thoughtful character, possessing more varied powers of fancy than were exhibited by any of the students who were labouring to acquire their art in the work-rooms of Cosimo Rosselli, at the same time with himself. He was not unfrequently so profoundly absorbed in whatever might be the matter in hand, that if any conversation was going forward—as frequently happens—it was necessary to recommence the whole narration for him as soon as it was brought to an end, so completely had his attention been abstracted in another direction. He was a great lover of solitude, and knew no greater pleasure than that of getting away by himself to indulge without interruption in his own cogitations, and to build up his castles in the air.

The peculiarities of Piero's character became more strikingly manifest after the death of Cosimo, seeing that he thenceforward kept himself constantly shut up, he would not permit any one to see him work, but lived the life of a wild beast rather than that of a man. He would never suffer his rooms to be swept, and would

eat just at such moments as he felt hungry, he would not have the soil of his garden cultivated, or the fruit-trees pruned, but suffered the vines to grow wild, and permitted their shoots to extend over the paths, neither would he have the fig or other trees properly trained and attended to, preferring to see all things wild and savage about him, as he was himself, and he used to say that every thing of that kind was better left to Nature, to be tended by herself alone without further consideration. He would sometimes set himself to seek animals, plants, or other productions out of the common order, such as Nature will sometimes bring forth either by chance or from caprice. In these things he took indescribable pleasure, insomuch that they transported him out of himself, and he would describe them so frequently, that even to persons who could take pleasure in them the relation at length became tedious. He would sometimes stand beside a wall, against which sick persons had expectorated during a long period, and from this he would image forth the most singular scenes, combats of horses, strangely ordered cities, and the most extraordinary landscapes that ever were seen; he did the same thing with the clouds of the sky also.<sup>1</sup>

Piero devoted much attention to oil-painting, having seen certain works by Leonardo da Vinci, painted with the harmony and finished with the extraordinary care which that master was accustomed to bestow on his paintings, when he intended to show the power of his art. Piero, therefore, being much pleased

<sup>1</sup> Leonardo da Vinci recommended a similar device for arousing the mind to new conceptions. "And this is," he says, "when you look at a wall spotted with stains, or with a mixture of stones, you may discover a resemblance to various landscapes, beautified with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, plains, wide valleys, and hills, in varied arrangement; or again, you may see battles and figures in action, or strange faces and costumes, and an endless variety of objects, which you could reduce to complete and well-drawn forms. And these appear on such walls confusedly, like the sound of bells in whose jingle you may find any name or word you choose to imagine."—RICHTER, *Literary Works of Leonardo*, vol. i. p. 254.



with that manner, desired to imitate it, although he was very far from approaching Leonardo, and was entirely unlike him ; his manner was indeed altogether different from that of most other artists, in its extravagance or peculiarities ; nay, he may even be said to have changed it and adopted a new one, for every new work that he executed.

Had Piero di Cosimo been less eccentric, had he imposed a more careful restraint on himself, during the course of his long life, the extent of that genius which he certainly possessed would have been made more clearly manifest, he might indeed have rendered himself truly admirable, whereas by the absurdity and extravagance of his life he caused himself to be considered a mere fool. In the end, however, he did no harm to any one but himself, while his works have been very beneficial to the art.

I will not omit to mention that in his youth, Piero di Cosimo, being extremely fanciful and abounding in the most singular inventions, was perpetually called upon to give aid in those maskings which are customary during the Carnival ; when he rendered himself highly acceptable to the young nobles of Florence, by the various improvements which he effected in the decorations required, and by the great increase of pomp and variety which his inventions imparted to that kind of amusement. Piero is said to have been the first who gave the character of a triumphal procession to these maskings, or who at least ameliorated them to such a degree that he may be said to have perfected them : for not only did he add appropriate words and music to the representation of the events chosen as the subject, but he also caused the procession to be accompanied by large trains, consisting of men on foot and on horseback in vast numbers ; these were all clothed in magnificent habits, selected with much judgment and carefully adapted to the character supported by the wearer. The effect of this was exceedingly rich and beautiful, and had altogether something very ingenious in its varied details ; nor was the show without a certain grandeur in its character which was certainly imposing. To see at night, by the light of innumerable torches, twenty-five

or thirty pairs of horses richly caparisoned, with their riders splendidly arrayed, according to the subject represented, was without doubt an attractive and beautiful spectacle. Six or eight attendants, also on horseback, accompanied each cavalier, all clothed in the same livery and each bearing a torch in his hand; of these there were sometimes above four hundred: next followed the triumphal chariot, elaborately decorated with trophies and fanciful ornaments of various kinds, a thing which was not without its utility in sharpening the wits of the contrivers, while it gave infinite pleasure and delight to the people.

Among these spectacles, which were numerous as well as ingeniously arranged, I am inclined briefly to describe one, which was, for the most part, invented by Piero, when he had already attained to mature age; this show was not of a pleasing or attractive character, but, on the contrary, was altogether strange, terrible, and unexpected; it gave no small pleasure to the people nevertheless, for as in their food they sometimes prefer the sharp and bitter savours, so in their pastimes are they attracted by things horrible; and these, provided they be presented to us with art and judgment, do indeed most wonderfully delight the human heart, a truth which is made apparent from the pleasure with which we listen to the recitation of tragedy. The spectacle here alluded to was the Triumph of Death; the car was prepared in the Hall of the Pope by Piero himself, and with so much secrecy, that no breath or suspicion of his purpose got abroad, and the completed work was made known and given to view at one and the same moment. The triumphal Car was covered with black cloth, and was of vast size, it had skeletons and white crosses painted upon its surface, and was drawn by buffaloes, all of which were totally black: within the Car stood the colossal figure of Death, bearing the scythe in his hand, while around him were covered tombs, which opened at all the places where the procession halted, while those who formed it chanted lugubrious songs, when certain figures stole forth, clothed in black cloth, on these vestments the bones of a skeleton were

depicted in white; the arms, breast, ribs, and legs, namely, all which gleamed horribly forth on the black beneath. At a certain distance appeared figures bearing torches, and wearing masks, presenting the face of a death's head, both before and behind; these heads of death, as well as the skeleton neck beneath them, also exhibited to view, were not only painted with the utmost fidelity to nature, but had besides a frightful expression which was horrible to behold. At the sound of a wailing summons, sent forth with a hollow moan from trumpets of muffled yet inexorable tones, the figures of the dead raised themselves half out of their tombs, and seating their skeleton forms thereon, they sang the following words, now so much extolled and admired, to music of the most plaintive and melancholy character:—

*Dolor, pianto, e penitenzia, etc.*

Before and after the Car rode a train of the dead on horses, carefully selected from the most wretched and meagre animals that could be found; the caparisons of these worn, half-dying creatures were black, covered with white crosses; each was conducted by four attendants, clothed in the vestments of the grave; these last-mentioned figures, bearing black torches and a large black standard, covered with crosses, bones, and death's heads. While this train of the dead proceeded on its way, each sang, with a trembling voice, and all in dismal unison, that psalm of David called the *Misereère*.

The old people who still remain of those by whom the procession above described was witnessed, retain the most lively recollection of the scene, and are never weary of extolling the extraordinary spectacle presented by it. I remember to have heard Andrea di Cosimo, who assisted Piero in the preparation of the show, and Andrea del Sarto, who was Piero's disciple and also took part in it, affirm that this invention was intended, as was believed at the time, to signify and prefigure the return to Florence of the Medici family, for at the time when this triumph was exhibited the Medici were exiles, and so to speak *dead*, but dead that might be expected soon to arise again.



Beyond all doubt Piero di Cosimo has given evidence in his works of the richest and most varied power of invention, with indubitable originality and a certain subtlety in the investigation of difficulties which have rarely been exceeded. His inquiries into the more recondite properties of Nature, in her external forms, were conducted with a zeal that rendered him regardless of the amount of time or labour bestowed on whatever might be the matter in hand. While seeking to penetrate the secrets of his art, no effort was too severe; he would endure any hardship for the mere love which he bore to the pursuit, and in the hope of obtaining an advantage for the vocation of his choice, Piero di Cosimo was indeed so earnestly devoted to the interests of art as to become totally regardless of himself and his personal convenience, insomuch that he would allow himself no better food than hard eggs, and, to save firing, he cooked these only when he had prepared a fire to boil his glues, varnishes, etc.; nor would he cook them even thus by six or eight at a time, but boiled them by fifties; he would then set them apart in a basket, and ate them at any moment when he felt the necessity for food. This mode of existence suited him perfectly, so that all others appeared to him to be mere slavery in comparison with his own. He was much disturbed by the cries of children, the sound of bells, the singing of the monks, and even by the coughing of men. When the rain was falling in torrents, he delighted to see the water streaming down from the roofs and pour splashing to the ground; but lightning caused him excessive terror, insomuch that he would shut himself up when he heard thunder, and, fastening the window and door of his room, would wrap his head in his cloak and crouch in a corner until the storm had subsided. Piero di Cosimo was extremely amusing and varied in conversation, and would sometimes say things so facetious and original that his hearers would be ready to die with laughing; but when he had attained to old age, and was near his eightieth year, he became so strangely capricious that no one could endure to be with him. He would not suffer even his scholars to be about him, so that his unsocial rudeness of manner caused him to be destitute of all aid in the



helplessness of his age. He would sometimes be seized with a desire to get to his work, when, his palsied state preventing him, he would fall into fits of rage, and labour to force his trembling hands to exertions of which they were no longer capable; while thus raving or muttering, the mahl-stick would drop from his grasp, or even the pencils themselves would fall from his fingers, so that it was pitiable to behold. The flies on the wall would sometimes arouse him to anger, nay, even the very shadows became an offence to him, and thus, sickening of mere old age, the few friends who still continued to visit him exhorted the dying man to make his peace with God; but he put them off from day to day, not that he was an impious or unbelieving person; he was, on the contrary, a very zealous Christian, though of so rude a life, but he did not believe himself to be so near death—nay, was convinced to the contrary. He would sometimes discourse largely of the torments endured by those who die of lingering diseases, and remark how deplorably they must suffer who find their strength, mental and bodily, alike gradually decaying, and see themselves to be dying by little and little, which he declared must needs be a great affliction; he would then abuse all physicians, apothecaries, and sick-nurses, declaring that they suffered their patients to die of hunger; next he would expatiate on the wretchedness of having to swallow syrups or potions of any kind; would enumerate the various martyrdoms endured from other curative processes, talk of the cruelty of being roused up to take physic when a man would rather sleep on, the torment of having to make a will, the wretchedness of seeing kinsfolk wailing around one, and the misery of being shut up in a dark room. Of death by the hand of justice, on the contrary, he would speak in terms of the highest commendation. It must be such a fine thing to be led forth to one's death in that manner; to see the clear, bright, open air, and all that mass of people; to be comforted, moreover, with sugar-plums and kind words; to have the priests and the people all praying for you alone, and to enter into Paradise with the angels. He considered the man who departed from this life suddenly to

have singular good fortune, and thus would he dilate in a manner the most extraordinary, turning everything to the strangest significations imaginable.

Living thus peculiarly, in the midst of these eccentric fancies, he brought himself to such a state that he was found dead one morning at the foot of a staircase.<sup>1</sup> This happened in the year 1521, when he received the rites of sepulture in San Piero Maggiore.

<sup>1</sup> His dwelling is believed to have been in the Gualfonda, one of the most retired and solitary quarters of the city.—BOTTARI.

## FRA BARTOLOMMEO DI SAN MARCO.

[BORN 1475—DIED 1517.]

IN the vicinity of Prato, which is at the distance of some ten miles from the city of Florence, and at a village called Savignano, was born Bartolommeo, according to the Tuscan practice called Baccio. From his childhood Bartolommeo evinced not only a great inclination but an extraordinary aptitude for the study of design, and by the intervention of Benedetto da Maiano he was placed under the discipline of Cosimo Roselli, being taken into the house of certain of his kinsfolk who dwelt near the gate of San Piero Gattolini, where Bartolommeo also dwelt many years, for which reason he was always called Baccio della Porta, nor was he known by any other name.

Baccio della Porta was much beloved in Florence, not only for his talents, but for his many excellent qualities; devoted to labour, of a quiet mind, upright by nature, and duly impressed with the fear of God; a retired life was that of his choice, he shunned all vicious practices, delighted greatly in the preaching of pious men, and always sought the society of the learned and sober.

Now it happened at the time of which I now speak that Fra Girolamo Savonarola, of Ferrara, a renowned theologian of the order of Preachers, was in the convent of San Marco, where Baccio attended his preaching with infinite devotion, and with all the respect which he felt for the person of the preacher; he thus became closely intimate with Fra Girolamo, and spent almost all his time in the convent, having contracted a friendship with the other monks also. Girolamo meanwhile

continued to preach daily ; and his zeal increasing, he daily declaimed from the pulpit against licentious pictures, among other things ; showing how these, with music and books of similar character, were calculated to lead the mind to evil ; he also asserted his conviction, that in houses where young maidens dwelt it was dangerous and improper to retain pictures wherein there were undraped figures. Now it was the custom in that city to erect cabins of fire-wood and other combustibles on the public piazza during the time of Carnival, and on the night of Shrove Tuesday, these huts being set ablaze, the people were wont to dance around them while thus burning, men and women that is to say, joining hands, according to ancient custom, encircled these fires, with songs and dances. On the return of the Carnival following the period of which we now speak, however, Fra Girolamo's exhortations had so powerfully affected the people, that instead of these accustomed dances they brought pictures and works in sculpture, many by the most excellent masters—all which they cast into the fire, with books and musical instruments, which were burnt in like manner—a most lamentable destruction ; and more particularly as to the paintings. To this pile brought Baccio della Porta all his studies and drawings which he had made from the nude figure, when they were consumed in the flames. His example was followed by Lorenzo di Credi, and by many others, who received the appellation of the *Piagnoni*.

It happened afterwards that the party opposed to Fra Girolamo rose against him, determining to deliver him into the hands of justice, and to make him answerable for the insurrections which he had excited in the city ; but the friends of the monk, perceiving their intention, assembled also, to the number of five hundred, and shut themselves up in San Marco, Baccio della Porta joining himself to them, for the very great affection which he bore to Fra Girolamo. It is true that having but very little courage, being indeed of a timid and even cowardly disposition, he lost heart on hearing the clamours of an attack which was made upon the convent shortly after, and seeing some wounded and others killed, he began to have grievous



doubts respecting his position. Thereupon he made a vow, that if he might be permitted to escape from the rage of that strife, he would instantly assume the religious habit of the Dominicans. The vow thus taken he afterwards fulfilled to the letter; for when the struggle was over, and when the monk, having been taken prisoner, had been condemned to death, as will be found circumstantially related by the historians of the period, Baccio della Porta departed to Prato, where he assumed the habit of San Domenico on the 26th of July, in the year 1500, as we find recorded in the chronicles of that convent. This determination caused much regret to all his friends, who grieved exceedingly at having lost him, and all the more as he had resolved to abandon the study of painting.

When Fra Bartolommeo had been several months in the convent of San Marco, he was sent by his superiors to Florence, they having appointed him to take up his abode as a monk in the convent of San Marco in that city, where his talents and good qualities caused him to receive numberless marks of kindness from the monks with whom he dwelt. At that time Bernardo del Bianco had caused to be constructed in the abbey of Florence a chapel, richly and beautifully erected, of cut stone, after the designs of Bernardino da Rovezzano; a work which was then and is now much admired for its varied beauty. For this chapel Bernardo desired to obtain an altar-piece which should be worthy of its beauty; and feeling convinced that Fra Bartolommeo would be exactly the person to execute what he wished, he used every possible means, by the intervention of friends, and by all other methods, to dispose the monk to that undertaking. Fra Bartolommeo was then in his convent, exclusively occupied with his attention to the religious services, and to the duties imposed by the rule of his Order, although frequently entreated by the Prior, as well as by his own dearest friends, to commence some work in painting. Four years had now passed since he had refused to execute any labours of that kind, but on the occasion we are now describing, being pressed by the importunities of Bernardo del Bianco, he was at length prevailed on to begin the picture of St. Bernard.

Having heard much of the excellent works which Michael Angelo and the graceful Raphael were performing in Rome, and being moved by the praises of these masters, for the monk was perpetually receiving accounts of the marvels effected by the two divine artists, he finally, having obtained permission of the Prior, repaired to Rome. But the labours undertaken by Fra Bartolommeo in the air of Rome were not so successful as those executed while he breathed that of Florence ; among the vast numbers of works, ancient and modern, which he there found in such overwhelming abundance, he felt himself bewildered and astounded ; the proficiency in art which he had believed himself to possess now appeared to him to be greatly diminished, and he determined to depart.

Thus Fra Bartolommeo returned to Florence, and as he had been frequently assailed there with declarations to the effect that he was not capable of painting nude figures, he resolved to show what he could do, and prove that he could accomplish the highest labours of the art as well as other masters ; to this end he painted a San Sebastian, wholly undraped, by way of specimen ; the colouring of this figure is like that of the living flesh, the countenance most beautiful, and in perfect harmony with the beauty of the form ; the whole work, in short, is finished with exquisite delicacy, insomuch that it obtained him infinite praise from the artists. It is said that when this painting was put up in the church, the monks discovered, from what they heard in the confessionals, that the grace and beauty of the vivid imitation of life, imparted to his work by the talents of Fra Bartolommeo, had given occasion to the sin of light and evil thoughts ; they consequently removed it from the church and placed it in the Chapter House.

Fra Bartolommeo always considered it advisable to have the living object before him when he worked ; and the better to execute his draperies, arms, and things of similar kind, he caused a figure, the size of life, to be made in wood, with the limbs movable at the joints, and on this he then arranged the real draperies, from which he afterwards produced admirable paintings, seeing that he could retain these things in the desired

position as long as he pleased. This model, worm-eaten and ruined as it is, I keep as a memorial of this excellent master.

In consequence of having laboured perpetually beneath a window, the rays from which poured constantly on his back, one side of his body became paralysed, and he could not move himself. He was therefore advised by his physician to proceed to the baths at San Filippo, but although he remained there a considerable time, he became but very little better. Fra Bartolommeo was a great lover of fruit, although it was exceedingly injurious to his health; wherefore one morning, having eaten very plentifully of figs, he was attacked, in addition to his previous malady, with a violent access of fever, which finished the course of his life in four days, and when he had attained the age of forty-eight years; he retained his consciousness to the last, and with humble trust resigned his soul to heaven.

## MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI.

[BORN 1474—DIED 1515.]

MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI was the most intimate and trusted friend of Fra Bartolommeo, one may almost say his other self, not only because they were continually together, but also for the similarity of their manner, seeing that when Mariotto gave undivided attention to his art, there was a very close resemblance between his works and those of Fra Bartolommeo.

Mariotto was the son of Biagio di Bindo Albertinelli ; up to the age of twenty he had practised the trade of a gold-beater ; he acquired the first principles of painting in the workshops of Cosimo Roselli, and while there formed an intimate acquaintanceship with Baccio della Porta. They were indeed so completely of one mind, and such was the brotherly affection existing between them, that when Baccio left the workshop of Cosimo to exercise his art as a master, Mariotto left it also, and again joined himself to his companion. They accordingly both dwelt for a long time at the gate of San Pier Gattolini, where they executed numerous works in company, when Baccio departed, with the resolution of becoming a monk, Mariotto had well-nigh gone out of his senses, so completely was he overwhelmed by the loss of his companion. The determination of Baccio appeared to him so extraordinary, that he fell into a state of desperation ; for a long time he could take pleasure in nothing, his life was as a burden to him, and at that period his love for Baccio would certainly have induced him to throw himself into the same convent, had it not been for the antipathy with which he always regarded all monks, of whom he was



continually uttering the most injurious remarks: he had even attached himself to the party of those who opposed Fra Girolamo of Ferrara; but had not these obstacles prevented him, there is no doubt that he would have taken the habit of the Dominicans with his friend.

At the Certosa of Florence, Mariotto Albertinelli painted a Crucifix, with our Lady and the Magdalen at the foot of the Cross, while above them are angels receiving the blood of Christ. Now it chanced that certain of the young men who were studying their art with Mariotto, and worked with him at the Certosa, were dissatisfied with the table supplied to them by the monks, who, as they thought, did not treat them becomingly. Without the knowledge of their master, the disciples thereupon made keys, resembling those of the windows looking into the cells of the monks, and through which they were accustomed to receive their food; by this means they contrived to steal the pittance of the inhabitants, now robbing one and now another. This caused a great outcry among the brethren, for in matters of the mouth a monk is quite as sensitive as any other man, but as the young painters acted their part with great dexterity, and were considered to be very respectable, well-conducted persons, they did not attribute the blame to them, but, on the contrary, accused certain of the monks, whom they believed to have abstracted the food out of hatred to those robbed, and who obtained all the credit of the contrivance. One morning the truth was made known and the mystery explained, whereupon the monks, to be rid of their tormentors, agreed to double the rations of Mariotto and his scholars, provided only that they would promise to finish the work speedily, which was accordingly effected with great merriment and many a joyous laugh.

Mariotto was a man of restless character, a lover of the table, and addicted to the pleasures of life. It thus happened that the laborious minutiae and racking of brain attendant on the study and exercise of art became insufferable to him. He had frequently been not a little mortified also by the tongues of his brother artists, who tormented him, as their custom is and always has been, the habit descending from one to another by

inheritance, and being maintained in perpetual activity. He determined, therefore, to adopt a calling which, if less elevated, would be also less fatiguing and much more cheerful: our artist accordingly opened a very handsome hotel, the house being one of those outside the Gate of San Gallo; but not content with this he likewise established a tavern and eating-house at the Drago, near the Point Vecchio. In these places he performed the duties of host during several months, affirming that he had chosen a profession wherein there was no embarrassment with perspective, foreshortenings, or muscles, and what was still more, no criticism or censure to dread; whereas that which he had abandoned was beset, on the contrary, with all those disadvantages: the object of the calling he had left, Mariotto would remark, was to imitate flesh and blood, whereas that which he had adopted made both blood and flesh; here again, as he declared, he found himself daily receiving praises for his good wine, while in his old occupation he was perpetually criticised, and hourly compelled to listen to the blame bestowed on his performances.

But in a short time his newly-chosen employment became more intolerable than his early profession had been. Disgusted by the debasement of the avocation he had adopted, Mariotto resumed his painting, and executed numerous pictures of all kinds in the houses of the Florentine citizens.

Before Mariotto could bring a work to a conclusion, he painted it, and then painted it out again, several times, now darkening the colour, now rendering the tints clearer, at one time adding vivacity and glow, but immediately after diminishing the effect, yet never satisfying himself or producing what he desired, seeing that he could not feel certain of having succeeded in expressing with his hand all the thoughts which he had conceived in his mind; he found it impossible, that is, to make the pencil keep pace with the imagination. He wished, among other things, to find a white that should have more brilliancy than could be given by any previously known; whereupon he set himself to clarify the existing materials, hoping thereby to enhance the effect of the high lights at his pleasure. At length,

however, discovering that art is not equal to the production or representation of all that the human intellect is capable of conceiving, he resolved to content himself with what he had effected, since he could not attain to what was impossible.

Mariotto was subsequently invited to the convent of La Quercia, which is situated at a short distance from the Gate of Viterbo, and there, after having commenced a picture, he conceived a wish to visit Rome, whither he proceeded accordingly. While in that city Mariotto painted a picture in oil at the church of San Silvestro. Having completed this work, the master returned to La Quercia, where he had left an *inamorata*, to whom his thoughts had recurred with much affection during his residence in Rome: desiring therefore to appear to advantage in her presence, Mariotto exerted himself beyond his strength during the games of a festival, and being no longer young nor possessing the energies required for such efforts, he was compelled to take to his bed in consequence of that imprudence. Attributing his indisposition to the air of the place, he caused himself to be transported in a litter to Florence; but no restoratives nor applications were found sufficient to recover him from his malady, and in a few days he died in the forty-fifth year of his age. He was buried at San Piero Maggiore, in the city of Florence.

## TORRIGIANO

[BORN 1472—DIED 1528.]

TORRIGIANO was a student in the garden of Lorenzo; he was by nature of an excessively choleric and haughty disposition; powerful and robust in person, he was so violent and overbearing, that he was perpetually offending his fellow-students, to whom he not unfrequently offered outrage in deed as well as word.<sup>1</sup> The principal vocation of Torrigiano was that of the sculptor, but he also worked extremely well in terra-cotta, his manner being good and his works usually very beautiful. But he could never endure that any other should surpass himself, and often set himself to spoil with his hands such of the works of his fellow-students as he perceived to display a degree of excellence to which he could not attain, when, if those whom he thus attacked resented the injury, he would often assail them further, and that with something harder than words. He had an especial hatred to Michael Angelo, but for no other reason than because he saw him to be studiously devoted to his art, and knew that by night and on all holidays he secretly occupied himself with drawing in his own room, by which means he produced better works in the garden than any other student, and was accordingly much favoured by Lorenzo.

<sup>1</sup> Cellini, who knew Torrigiano many years later, after the return of the latter from England, describes him thus:—"This man was a magnificent figure, and of a most audacious deportment; he had the look of a huge trooper rather than of a sculptor, more especially when one observed his violent gestures and heard his sounding voice; he had a way of knitting his brow that was enough to frighten all who beheld him, and was for ever discoursing of his deeds of bravery," etc., etc.



Moved by a bitter and cruel envy, therefore, Torrigiano was constantly seeking to offend Michael Angelo, both in word and deed, insomuch that they one day came to blows, when Torrigiano struck Michael Angelo on the nose with his fist, using such terrible violence, and crushing that feature in such a manner that the proper form could never be restored to it, and Michael Angelo had his nose flattened by that blow all his life.<sup>1</sup> This circumstance having been made known to the magnificent Lorenzo, he was so greatly incensed against the offender, that if Torrigiano had not fled from Florence he would without doubt have inflicted some very heavy punishment on him.

The Pope, Alexander VI., was at this time occupied with the construction of that part of the Vatican called the Torre Borgia, and Torrigiano, who had repaired to Rome, on leaving Florence, was employed with others on the numerous decorations in stucco required for that building. Now the Duke Valentino was then making war in Romagna, and paid large sums to those who assisted him in recruiting his army, whereupon Torrigiano, being led away by other young Florentines, suddenly changed himself from a sculptor to a soldier, and comported himself very bravely in that campaign of Romagna. He did the same under Paolo Vitelli in the war against Pisa, and was with Piero de' Medici at the action on the Garigliano, where he obtained a pair of colours with the reputation of being a brave standard-bearer.

But after a time, perceiving that he should never be permitted

<sup>1</sup> Torrigiano himself described this affair to Cellini, but in terms calculated to give a different turn to the matter, relating it thus:—  
“This Buonarroti and I, when we were children, went together to the church of the Carmine to learn our art in the chapel of Masaccio. But Michael Angelo had the habit of bantering and tormenting all who studied there with him, and one day, among others, his words offended me so much that I became more than usually irritated, and, stretching forth my hand, I gave him so violent a blow on the nose with my closed fist that I felt the bones and cartilage crunch under my hand as if they had been thin biscuit, and thus, bearing my mark, will Michael Angelo remain all the days of his life.”

to attain the grade for which he had hoped and which he well merited, that of captain namely, and having saved nothing in the wars, nay, rather having vainly consumed all he had, as well as his time, Torrigiano resolved on resuming his sculpture. He at once prepared various small works in marble and bronze, little figures which he sold to certain Florentine merchants, and which are distributed among the houses of the citizens: he also made numerous drawings, which exhibit great boldness and a very good manner, as may be seen by some from his hand now in my book of designs, and by others which he made in competition with Michael Angelo. The merchants above mentioned ultimately invited our artist to proceed to England, where he executed many works in marble, bronze, and wood for the king, competing with other masters who were natives of that country, to all of whom he proved himself superior. And now did Torrigiano receive so many rewards, and was so largely remunerated, that, had he not been a most violent, reckless, and ill-conducted person, he might there have lived a life of ease, and brought his days to a quiet close, but being what he was, his career was ended in a manner which was altogether the reverse of peaceful.

Leaving England, he next went to Spain, where he executed various works, which are dispersed about in different places, and are everywhere highly prized. A figure of the Virgin with the Divine Child in her arms, also executed at this time by Torrigiano, was found to be so beautiful, that the Duke of Arcos earnestly desired to possess one of similar beauty. To obtain this from Torrigiano, he consequently made him so many fine promises, that the artist believed himself about to be enriched for ever. When the work was finished, the Duke gave him so large a quantity of those coins called "maravedis," which, however, are worth little or nothing, that Torrigiano, to whose house there had come two persons loaded with these coins, became more and more persuaded that he should at once become enormously rich. But showing this money to one of his Florentine friends, whom he desired to ascertain its value in Italian coin, he found that the whole of that vast quantity did not amount to thirty

ducats; whereupon, considering that he had been jested with, he threw himself into a violent rage, and proceeding to the spot where the figure which he had made for the Duke was placed, he broke it to pieces.

The Spaniard, having received this affront, avenged himself by accusing Torrigiano of heresy, and the latter was thrown into the prisons of the Inquisition: there, after being daily examined for some time, and sent from one inquisitor to another, he was finally adjudged to merit the heaviest punishment of the law. It is true that this was not put into execution, for Torrigiano, sunk into the deepest melancholy, refused all nourishment, and after remaining many days without eating, he became gradually weaker and more weak, until he finally ended his life.

## RAPHAEL SANZIO.

[BORN 1483—DIED 1520.]

RAPHAEL was born at Urbino, a most renowned city of Italy, in the year 1483. His father was a certain Giovanni de' Santi, a painter of no great eminence in his art, but a man of sufficient intelligence nevertheless, and perfectly competent to direct his children into that good way which had not for his misfortune been laid open to himself in his younger days. And first, as he knew how important it is that a child should be nourished by the milk of its own mother, and not by that of the hired nurse, so he determined when his son Raphael (to whom he gave that name at his baptism, as being one of good augury) was born to him, that the mother of the child,<sup>1</sup> he having no other, as indeed he never had more,<sup>2</sup> should herself be the nurse of the child. Giovanni further desired that, in its tender years, the boy should rather be brought up to the habits of his own family, and beneath his paternal roof, than be sent where he must acquire habits and manners less refined, and modes of thought less commendable, in the houses of the peasantry, or other untaught persons. As the child became older Giovanni began to instruct him in the first principles of painting, perceiving that he was much inclined to that art and finding him to be endowed with a most admirable genius; few years had passed therefore before Raphael, though still but a child, became a

<sup>1</sup> The mother of Raphael was Magia, daughter of Giovanni-Battista Ciarla; she died in 1491.

<sup>2</sup> When Raphael was born, Giovanni Santo had already one son, but this child died in 1485. He had afterwards one, or, as some say, two daughters.



valuable assistant to his father in the numerous works which the latter executed in the State of Urbino.<sup>1</sup>

At length this good and affectionate parent, knowing that his son would acquire but little of his art from himself, resolved to place him with Pietro Perugino, who, according to what Giovanni had been told, was then considered to hold the first place among the painters of the time. Wherefore, proceeding to Perugia for that purpose, and finding Pietro to be absent from the city, he occupied himself, to the end that he might await the return of the master with the less inconvenience in the execution of certain works for the church of San Francesco in that place. But when Pietro had returned to Perugia, Giovanni, who was a good-mannered and pleasing person, soon formed an amicable acquaintanceship with him, and when the opportunity arrived, made known to him the desire he had conceived. Thereupon Pietro, who was also exceedingly courteous, as well as a lover of fine genius, agreed to accept the care of Raphael; Giovanni then returned to Urbino; and having taken the boy, though not without many tears from his mother, who loved him tenderly, he conducted him to Perugia; when Pietro no sooner beheld his manner of drawing, and observed the pleasing deportment of the youth, than he conceived that opinion of him which was in due time amply confirmed by the after-life of Raphael.

It is a well-known fact that while studying the manner of Pietro, Raphael imitated it so exactly at all points, that his copies cannot be distinguished from the original works of the master, nor can the difference between the performances of Raphael and those of Pietro be discerned with any certainty.

While Raphael was acquiring the greatest fame by the pursuit of this manner, the painting of the library belonging to the Cathedral of Siena had been entrusted by Pope Pius II. to Bernardino Pinturicchio, who was a friend of Raphael's, and, knowing him to be an excellent designer, took the latter with him to Siena. Here Raphael made Pinturicchio certain of the

<sup>1</sup> But Giovanni died in 1594, when Raphael was but eleven years old.

designs and cartoons for that work; nor would the young artist have failed to continue there but for the reports which had reached him concerning Leonardo da Vinci, of whose merits he heard many painters of Siena speak in terms of the highest praise. These discourses awakened in Raphael so ardent a desire to behold the works thus commended, that, moved by the love he ever bore to excellence in art, and setting aside all thought of his own interest or convenience, he at once proceeded to Florence.

Arrived in that place, he found the city please him equally with the works he had come to see, although the latter appeared to him divine; he therefore determined to remain there for some time, and soon formed a friendly intimacy with several young painters, among whom were Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, Aristotele San Gallo, and others. He was, indeed, much esteemed in that city, but above all by Taddeo Taddei, who, being a great admirer of talent, desired to have him always in his house and at his table. Thereupon Raphael, who was kindness itself, that he might not be surpassed in generosity and courtesy, painted two pictures for Taddeo, wherein there are traces of his first manner, derived from Pietro, and also of that much better one which he acquired at a latter period by study. These pictures are still carefully preserved by the heirs of the above-named Taddeo.

While in the city of Florence, this most excellent painter studied the ancient works of Masaccio, and what he saw in the labours of Leonardo and Michael Angelo caused him still more zealously to prosecute his studies; he consequently attained to an extraordinary amelioration of manner, and made still further progress in art. Among other artists, Raphael formed a close intimacy with Fra Bartolommeo di San Marco, during his abode in Florence, the manner of that master pleasing him greatly, wherefore he took no small pains to imitate his colouring, teaching that good father on his part the rules of perspective, to which the monk had not previously given his attention.

This master painted the portrait of Beatrice of Ferrara, with those of other ladies; that of his own *inamorata* is more

particularly to be specified, but he also executed many others. He was very amorous and delighted in the society of woman, for whom he was ever ready to perform acts of service. But he permitted himself to be devoted too earnestly to carnal pleasures, and in this respect was perhaps more than duly considered and indulged by his friends and admirers. We find it related that his intimate friend Agostino Chigi had commissioned him to paint the first floor of his palace, but Raphael was at that time so much occupied with the love which he bore to a lady, that he could not give sufficient attention to the work. Agostino, therefore, falling at length into despair of seeing it finished, made so many efforts by means of friends and by his own care, that after much difficulty he at length prevailed on the lady to take up her abode in his house, where she was accordingly installed in apartments near those which Raphael was painting ; in this manner the work was ultimately brought to a conclusion.

This master lived in the strictest intimacy with Bernardo Divizio, Cardinal of Bibbiena, who had for many years importuned him to take a wife of his selection, nor had Raphael directly refused compliance with the wishes of the Cardinal, but had put the matter off, by saying that he would wait some three or four years longer. The term which he had thus set approached before Raphael had thought of it, when he was reminded by the Cardinal of his promise, and being, as he ever was, just and upright, he would not depart from his word, and therefore accepted a niece of the Cardinal himself for his wife. But as this engagement was nevertheless a very heavy restraint to him, he put off the marriage from time to time, insomuch that several months passed and the ceremony had not yet taken place. Yet this was not done without a very honourable motive, for Raphael having been for many years in the service of the Count, and being the creditor of Leo X. for a large sum of money, had received an intimation to the effect, that when the Hall with which he was then occupied was completed, the Pontiff intended to reward him for his labours as well as to do honour to his talents by bestowing on him the red hat, of which he meant to distribute a considerable number, many of them



being designed for persons whose merits were greatly inferior to those of Raphael. The painter meanwhile did not abandon the light attachment by which he was enchained, and one day on returning to his house from one of these secret visits, he was seized with a violent fever,<sup>1</sup> which being mistaken for a cold, the physicians inconsiderately caused him to be bled, whereby he found himself exhausted, when he had rather required to be strengthened. Thereupon he made his will, and, as a good Christian, he sent the object of his attachment from the house, but left her a sufficient provision wherewith she might live in decency; having done so much, he divided his property among his disciples; Giulio Romano, that is to say, whom he always loved greatly, and Giovanni Francesco, with whom was joined a certain priest of Urbino, who was his kinsman, but whose name I do not know. He furthermore commanded that a certain portion of his property should be employed in the restoration of one of the ancient tabernacles in Santa Maria Ritonda [the Pantheon], which he had selected as his burial-place, and for which he had ordered that an altar, with the figure of Our Lady in marble, should be prepared; all that he possessed besides he bequeathed to Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco, naming Messer Baldassare da Pescia, who was then Datary to the Pope, as his executor. He then confessed, and in much contrition completed the course of his life, on the day whereon it had commenced, which was Good Friday. The master was then in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and as he embellished the world by his talents while on earth, so is it to be believed that his soul is now adorning heaven.

In addition to the benefits which this great master conferred on art, being as he was its best friend, we have the further obligation to him of having taught us by his life in what manner we should comport ourselves towards great men, as well as towards those of lower degree, and even towards the lowest; and there was among his many extraordinary gifts one of such

<sup>1</sup> According to the most reliable account he caught cold through hastening to obey a summons from the Pope, and then being detained in a large hall.



value that I can never sufficiently admire it. This was the power accorded to him by Heaven of bringing all who approached his presence into harmony; an effect inconceivably surprising in our calling, and contrary to the nature of artists, yet all, I do not say of the inferior grades only, but even those who lay claim to be great personages (and of this humour our art produces immense numbers), became as of one mind, once they began to labour in the society of Raphael, continuing in such concord, that all harsh and evil dispositions became subdued at the sight of him; every base thought departing from the mind before his influence. Such harmony prevailed at no other time than his own. And this happened because he surpassed all in friendly courtesy as well as in art; all confessed the influence of his sweet and gracious nature, which was so replete with excellence, and so perfect in all the charities, that not only was he honoured by men, but even by the very animals, who would constantly follow his steps and always loved him.

We find it related, that whenever any other painter, whether known to Raphael or not, requested any design or assistance, of whatever kind, at his hands, he would invariably leave his work to do him service; he continually kept a large number of artists employed, all of whom he assisted and instructed with an affection which was rather as that of a father to his children, than merely as of an artist to artists. From these things it followed, that he was never seen to go to Court but surrounded and accompanied, as he left his house, by some fifty painters, all men of ability and distinction, who attended him thus to give evidence of the honour in which they held him. He did not, in short, live the life of a painter, but that of a prince. Most happy also may well be called those who, being in his service, worked under his own eye; since it has been found that all who took pains to imitate this master have arrived at a safe haven, and attained to a respectable position. In like manner, all who do their best to emulate his labours in art, will be honoured on earth, as it is certain that all who resemble him in the rectitude of his life will receive their reward in heaven.

## ANDREA DEL MONTE SANSOVINO.

[BORN 1460—DIED 1529.]

ALTHOUGH Andrea di Domenico Contucci's father was only a labourer of the earth, and he was himself brought up to guard the flocks, he was nevertheless of so exalted a mind, of intelligence so remarkable, and of so bold a spirit, that, whether in works or discourses relating to the difficulties of architecture and perspective, the period at which he lived could show no genius more truly elevated, no mind more subtle than his own.

Andrea was born, as we find it related, in the year 1460, and being employed in his childhood to herd the cattle, as is recorded of Giotto, he employed himself all day with drawing in the sand, or formed figures in clay, which he copied from some one or other of the animals he was guarding. It thus happened, that one day while the boy was in this manner employed in keeping his cattle, there passed by a certain Florentine citizen, said by common report to have been Simone Vespucci, who was then Podestà or mayor of the Monte, and who, seeing this child intent on his occupation of drawing or modelling in clay, called him to come and speak with him, when, finding the strong bent of his inclination, and hearing whose son he was, he demanded the boy of his father. This request was readily granted by Domenico, Simone promising to place the child where he might attend to the study of design, that all might see to what the natural inclination of which he gave proof could attain, when aided by instruction and by continual application. Having returned to Florence, Simone placed the boy with Antonio del

Pollaiuolo, with whom Andrea learned so much and so rapidly, that in a few years he became an excellent master.

Andrea Sansovino was not only distinguished in art, but was in other respects a remarkable man; in conversation he was prudent and wise, speaking well and to good purpose, whatever might be the subject on which he discoursed; upright in every action, he was a friend to the good and learned, in whose society, and in that of natural philosophers particularly, he took great delight. He gave some attention to questions of cosmography, and left many drawings to his heirs, with certain writings on the subject of distances and measurements. Somewhat small of stature, he was nevertheless well-proportioned, and of good constitution; his hair was long and soft, his eyes light, the nose aquiline, the complexion fair, with a good colour, but he had a slight impediment in his speech.

Architecture and sculpture are deeply indebted to Andrea Sansovino, seeing that he enriched the first by the elucidation of many laws relating to measure and proportion, by various methods for the raising of weighty bodies, and by a diligent forethought in the execution of works which, before his time, had not been sufficiently accorded to them. As regards the second, artists have by him been taught in what manner works in marble may, by judgment, care, and practice, be carried to the most admirable perfection.

## BALDASSARE PERUZZI.

[BORN 1481—DIED 1536.]

OF the Sienese painter and architect, Baldassare Peruzzi, it may truly be affirmed, that the modesty and goodness so beautifully exemplified in his life, were possessed to such a degree, as to form no mean part of that supreme tranquillity for which all men who think must needs sigh, and towards which all should constantly aspire; while the works which he has left to us are manifest fruits of that true genius which was breathed into his mind by Heaven itself.

I have called him above, Baldassare of Siena, because he was always considered a Sienese, but I will not omit to mention, that as seven cities contended for Homer, each desiring to claim him for her citizen, so have three most noble cities of Tuscany, Florence, Volterra, and Siena, namely, all maintained, each for herself, that Baldassare was of the number of her sons.<sup>1</sup>

Baldassare early gave token of the pleasure he found in the society of good and distinguished men; more especially delighting to frequent the workshops of the goldsmiths and others who practised the arts of design. Wherefore, eventually finding these arts please him, he gave all his attention to drawing, and his father dying about that period, Baldassare devoted himself to the study of painting with so much zeal, that in a very short

<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that Peruzzi belonged to Siena. His father did not belong to the noble family of that name, but was a weaver from Volterra.



time he made the most extraordinary progress Copying and imitating the works of the best masters, he yet gave his principal attention to nature and living objects, and thus early acquiring some little gain by his art, he found means to support himself while he aided his mother and sister, pursuing his studies in painting at the same time.

Baldassare contracted at Rome a most intimate friendship with Agostino Chigi of Siena, who received him to his intimacy not only because Baldassare considered himself a Sienese, but also because Agostino was by nature the friend of all distinguished men. With the assistance of such a man as Agostino Chigi, Baldassare found means to afford himself leisure for remaining during some time in Rome, occupied solely with the study and examination of the antiquities, but more particularly of those relating to architecture. In this vocation, emulous of Bramante, Baldassare made extraordinary progress in a very short time, which was afterwards, as I shall relate in due course, the cause of very great honour as well as profit to him; he gave considerable attention to the study of perspective also, and became so highly distinguished by his attainments therein, that very few who have laboured in our times can be named as his equals; the effect of this acquirement may be clearly perceived in all his works. Diligent and judicious, this master brought his works so successfully to completion, that he may truly be said never to have had his equal in architecture, and this principally because he combined with his knowledge of that art so beautiful and admirable a manner in painting and decoration.

When the *Calandra*, a drama written by the Cardinal di Bibiena, was performed before Pope Leo, Baldassare prepared all the scenic arrangements for that spectacle in a manner no less beautiful, nay rather it was much more so, than he had exhibited on the occasion referred to above; and his labours of this kind deserve all the more praise from the fact that these performances of the theatre, and consequently all required for their representation, had long been out of use, the festivals and sacred dramas having taken their place. But either before or after the representation of the *Calandra*, which was one of the

first comedies seen or recited in the vulgar tongue, in the time of Pope Leo X. that is to say, Baldassare painted two of these scenic decorations, which were surprisingly beautiful, and opened the way to those of a similar kind, which have been made in our own day. Now it appears to me difficult even to imagine how this artist has found it possible, within the closely limited space to which he was restricted, how he has found it possible, I say, to exhibit such a variety of objects as he has depicted, such a number of streets, palaces, temples, loggie, and fanciful erections of all kinds, with cornices and ornaments of every sort, so perfectly represented that they do not look like things feigned, but are as the living reality: neither does the piazza, which is the site of all these edifices, appear to be, as it is, a narrow space merely painted, but looks entirely real and of noble extent. In the arrangement of the lights also Baldassare showed equal ability, in those of the interior, which are designed to enhance the effect of the views in perspective, more especially; every other requisite demanded for the occasion was added with similar judgment; and this is the more remarkable, because the habit of preparing such things had, as I have said, been totally lost. This kind of entertainment is nevertheless superior in my opinion to those of every other character, when it has all the appliances required for its perfection, surpassing them all by very far, however sumptuous and magnificent they may be.

Then came the deplorable sack and plunder of Rome, in the year 1527, and the unfortunate Baldassare was made prisoner by the Spaniards; when not only did he lose all that he possessed, but he was also grievously maltreated and tormented by them: for it so chanced that Baldassare, being a man of noble, grave, and commanding aspect, was believed by them to be some great prelate or other man of high rank in disguise, and one who could pay an enormous ransom. Finally, however, those most impious barbarians discovered that he was indeed a painter, and one of them, who was a devoted adherent of the Constable de Bourbon, compelled our artist to take the portrait of that reprobate commander, the enemy of God and of all good men; either by showing him his corpse, dead as he was, or by

some other means, perhaps by giving him drawings of the face or describing it in words: enough, they compelled him to make the portrait.

Having escaped at length from the hands of the Spaniards, Baldassare took ship to go to Porta Escole, proposing to proceed thence to Siena; but on the way he was so effectually plundered, so completely stripped and despoiled of everything, that he entered Siena deprived of all but his shirt. He was nevertheless honourably received and clothed anew by his friends; nor did any long time elapse before he entered the service of the Republic, and was appointed superintendent of all works connected with the fortifications of the city. While thus residing in Siena, two sons were born to Baldassare; he was employed, as I have said, in the public service, and made numerous designs moreover for the houses of his fellow-citizens, as he did that for the organ of the Church of the Carmine, which is exceedingly beautiful.

Baldassare did not neglect meanwhile the study of astrology, in which he greatly delighted, nor that of mathematics, and others in which he took pleasure. He also commenced a book on the Antiquities of Rome, with a Commentary on Vitruvius, gradually preparing the designs, that is to say, in illustration of that author's writings, some part of which commencement is now to be seen in the possession of Francesco da Siena, who was his disciple. Among these are designs after the ancient manner, as well as others proper to the modern mode of building.

But notwithstanding the great talents of this noble artist, his numerous works availed but little to his own advantage, however useful to others. It is true that he was employed by Popes, Cardinals, and other great and rich personages, but no one of them ever conferred on him any real and effectual benefit; yet this may very possibly have happened, not so much from the want of liberality in those nobles (although they are for the most part ever most open-handed in cases where they should be least so), as from the timidity and excessive modesty, or to say what in this case was the fact—the simplicity and faint-heartedness of Baldassare. But it is certain that by as



much as all should be discreet and moderate in respect of princes who are magnanimous and liberal, by so much is it needful to be importunate and pressing towards those who are avaricious, ungrateful, and discourteous; for inasmuch as an unremitting demand would be an unpardonable error, nay a vice, if applied to the upright and liberal, insomuch is it a virtue when practised against the mean and avaricious; nay, to be modest with such people is an absurdity and a wrong. Baldassare thus found himself very poor as age came on, and was beside burdened with a family; finally, after having always lived a most upright and honourable life, he fell grievously sick, and was obliged to confine himself to his bed; hearing which, and, when too late, perceiving the loss he was about to incur by the death of such a man, Pope Paul III. sent him one hundred scudi by the hands of Jacopo Melighi, accountant of San Pietro, making him at the same time the most friendly offers and promises. But the illness of Baldassare increased, perhaps because it was ordained so to be, or, as some believe, because his malady was provoked, and his death hastened by the effect of a poison administered to him by one of his rivals, who desired to succeed him in his office, from which he derived two hundred and fifty scudi per annum. The physicians did not discover this until it was too late, and Baldassare died in great sorrow; but more on account of his family and of the painful condition in which he was leaving them, than for himself.

The fame of Baldassare was greater after his death than during his life; more particularly were his judgment and knowledge vainly desired, when Pope Paul III. determined to cause the church of San Pietro to be completed, seeing that all then discovered how useful his assistance would have been to Antonio da San Gallo. It is true that the last-named architect effected much in accomplishing what we now possess; but he would, nevertheless, as is believed, have seen his way more clearly through certain of the difficulties incidental to that work had he performed his labours in company with Baldassare.



## ANDREA DEL SARTO.

[BORN 1486—DIED 1531.]

IN Andrea del Sarto art and nature combined to show all that may be done in painting, when design, colouring, and invention unite in one and the same person. Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was for genius and depth of judgment in the art he practised, he would beyond all doubt have been without an equal. But there was a certain timidity of mind, a sort of diffidence and want of force in his nature, which rendered it impossible that those evidences of ardour and animation, which are proper to the more exalted character, should ever appear in him; nor did he at any time display one particle of that elevation which, could it have been added to the advantages wherewith he was endowed, would have rendered him a truly divine painter; wherefore the works of Andrea are wanting in those ornaments of grandeur, richness, and force which appear so conspicuously in those of many other masters. His figures are nevertheless well drawn, they are entirely free from errors, and perfect in all their proportions, and are for the most part simple and chaste: the expression of his heads is natural and graceful in women and children, while in youths and old men it is full of life and animation. The draperies of this master are beautiful to a marvel, and the nude figures are admirably executed, the drawing is simple, the colouring is most exquisite, it is truly divine.

Andrea was born in Florence in the year 1488, his father was a tailor, for which cause he was always called Andrea del Sarto

by every one. Having attained the age of seven, he was taken from the reading and writing school to be placed with a goldsmith, and while thus employed was always more willing to occupy himself with drawing than with the use of the chisel, or of such tools as are used by the goldsmith to work in silver and gold. Now it chanced that Gian Barile, a Florentine painter, but one of a coarse and plebeian taste, had remarked the good manner which the child displayed in drawing, and took him to himself, making him abandon the art of the goldsmith and causing him to give his attention to that of painting. In this Andrea accordingly began to occupy himself to his very great pleasure, and soon perceived with joy that nature had formed him for that vocation: in a very short space of time, therefore, he was seen to do such things with the colours, that Gian Barile and the other artists of the city were struck with astonishment. After the lapse of three years, having been very zealous in his studies, he was found to have attained much skill in execution, and Gian Barile, perceiving that if the boy continued his endeavours, he would certainly make an extraordinary painter, spoke concerning him to Piero di Cosimo, who was then considered one of the best masters in Florence, and finally placed Andrea under his care. Full of anxiety to learn his art, the latter studied without ceasing, and his perpetual labour, conjoined with the natural endowments which proved him to be born a painter, produced so great an effect, that when handling the colours he displayed a grace and facility which could scarcely have been surpassed by one who had used the same for fifty years.

Piero consequently soon conceived a very great affection for his disciple, and heard with indescribable pleasure that whenever Andrea had a little time to himself, more particularly on festival days, he spent the whole of it in drawing, with other young men, in the hall of the Pope, where was then the Cartoon of Michelagnolo, with that of Leonardo da Vinci, and that he there, although still but a youth, surpassed all the other students, natives as well as strangers, who were almost perpetually vying with each other in that place.

But of all those whom he thus met, Franciabigio was the one whose character and conversation were most agreeable to Andrea del Sarto, and as the latter was equally acceptable to Franciabigio, they became friends; Andrea then confessed to Francia that he could no longer endure the eccentricity of Piero, who had now become old, and that he had therefore determined to seek an abode for himself. Now it chanced that Franciabigio was on the point of doing the same thing, being compelled thereto by the circumstance of his master, Mariotto Albertinelli, having abandoned the art of painting: hearing what Andrea said therefore, he told him that he also had to take a similar step, and remarked to his companion at the same time that it would be for the benefit of both if they were to establish themselves together. They hired a dwelling accordingly, on the Piazza del Grano, and executed many works in company.

In the convent of the Servites there was at that period a monk acting as Sacristan, who had also the superintendence of the wax-lights sold there, and was called Fra Mariano del Canto alla Macine. This monk heard every one praising Andrea, and affirming that he was making most wonderful progress in the art of painting; he, therefore, set about contriving to gratify a wish of his own, at small cost. Attacking Andrea, who was a kind man and of mild manners, on the side of his honour, he accordingly proceeded to affect a great interest in him, and declared himself anxious to assist him, from motives of kindness, in a matter which could not but redound to the glory of the painter and would bring him great profit also, besides making him known in such a manner that he would never more be poor or wanting in anything.

Now, it had happened many years previously, that Alesso Baldovinetti had painted a Nativity of Christ, as I have before related, in the first cloister of the Servites, and on that side which joins the church of the Nunziata; while Cosimo Rosselli had commenced a story on the opposite side of the same cloister; the subject being San Filippo, who was the founder of that Order of the Servites, receiving the monastic habit; but this work had not been completed by Cosimo, who died

while still engaged with its execution. The sacristan, therefore, greatly desiring to have it finished, thought so to manage matters, that he might turn the emulation of Andrea and Franciabigio, who, from having been friends, had now become rivals in art, to his own account: his plan was to make each take a part of the work, when, as both would be incited by their rivalry in art to do their utmost, the sacristan expected to be the more effectually served, and at much diminished cost, while to them the labour would be increased in an equal proportion.

Having opened his mind to Andrea, he laboured hard to persuade him to undertake the office proposed, by pointing out to him that as the place was a public and much frequented one, he would thus make himself known, not only to the Florentines but to strangers, adding, that he ought, on that account, not to think of expecting any payment for his work, nay, rather, if he had not been invited to perform it, should have even begged permission to do so. Fra Mariano, furthermore, remarked, that if Andrea would not undertake the matter, there was Franciabigio, who had offered to accomplish the whole, for the purpose of making himself known, and was willing to leave the question of payment to him, the sacristan.

These considerations were well calculated to secure Andrea's compliance, although he had but little mind on the whole to undertake such a charge; but the reference to Franciabigio effectually determined him, and he resolved to accept it, making an agreement in writing, to the effect that he was to have the whole, that none other might be permitted to intervene. The monk having thus pledged him, gave him money to make the necessary preparations, requiring that he should first continue the representation of events from the life of San Filippo; but all that Andrea obtained from the sacristan was the sum of ten ducats for each picture, Fra Mariano declaring that he gave so much out of his own purse, and did all that he was doing, more for the advantage of Andrea himself than for the benefit or need of the Convent. The artist laboured, therefore, as one who thought more of his honour than of reward, and working with the utmost diligence, in no long time he had completed three of the stories.



The one side of the cloister was now completed, and as Andrea thought the reward too little, and considered the honour to be rated at too high a price, he determined to abandon the remainder of the undertaking; the monk complained bitterly at this, and would not set the artist free from the agreement he had made but on condition that the latter should paint two other stories, to be executed at his own leisure and convenience, with an increase of price, and so they remained of accord.

Various labours secured so great a name for Andrea in his native city, that among the many artists, old and young, who were then painting, he was accounted one of the best that handled pencil and colours. Our artist then found himself to be not only honoured and admired, but also in a condition, notwithstanding the really mean price that he accepted for his labours, which permitted him to render assistance to his family, while he still remained unoppressed for his own part by those cares and anxieties which beset those who are compelled to live in poverty. But having fallen in love with a young woman whom on her becoming a widow he took for his wife, he found that he had enough to do for the remainder of his days, and was subsequently obliged to work much more laboriously than he had previously done; for in addition to the duties and liabilities which engagements of that kind are wont to bring with them, Andrea del Sarto found that he had brought on himself many others; he was now tormented by jealousy, now by one thing, now by another; but ever by some evil consequence of his new connection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of Vasari the history of Andrea's marriage is given at greater length. Our author there says: "At that time there was a most beautiful girl in the Via di San Gallo, who was married to a cap-maker, and who, though born of a poor and vicious father, carried about her as much pride and haughtiness as beauty and fascination. She delighted in trapping the hearts of men, and among others ensnared the unlucky Andrea, whose immoderate love for her soon caused him to neglect the studies demanded by his art, and in great measure to discontinue the assistance which he had given to his parents.

"Now it chanced that a sudden and grievous illness seized the husband

While Andrea was thus labouring over work in Florence, poorly remunerated for his toils, living in wretched poverty and wholly incapable of raising himself from his depressed condition,<sup>1</sup> two pictures which he had sent into France were of this woman, who rose no more from his bed, but died thereof. Without taking counsel of his friends therefore; without regard to the dignity of his art or the consideration due to his genius, and to the eminence he had attained with so much labour; without a word, in short, to any of his kindred, Andrea took this Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede, such was the name of the woman, to be his wife; her beauty appearing to him to merit thus much at his hands, and his love for her having more influence over him than the glory and honour towards which he had begun to make such hopeful advances. But when this news became known in Florence, the respect and affection which his friends had previously borne to Andrea changed to contempt and disgust, since it appeared to them that the darkness of this disgrace had obscured for a time all the glory and renown obtained by his talents.

“But he destroyed his own peace as well as estranged his friends by this act, seeing that he soon became jealous, and found that he had besides fallen into the hands of an artful woman, who made him do as she pleased in all things. He abandoned his own poor father and mother, for example, and adopted the father and sisters of his wife in their stead; insomuch that all who knew the facts mourned over him, and he soon began to be as much avoided as he had previously been sought after. His disciples still remained with him, it is true, in the hope of learning something useful, yet there was not one of them, great or small, who was not maltreated by his wife, both by evil words and spiteful actions; none could escape her blows, but although Andrea lived in the midst of all that torment, he yet accounted it a high pleasure.” This description has all the more significance when we remember that Vasari was himself one of Andrea’s disciples. The name of the gentle lady thus attractively depicted by our author was Lucrezia Recanati, according to Biadi; that of her husband, the “cap-maker,” being Carlo Recanati.

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of the *Lives* this paragraph commences as follows:—“Andrea now began to feel, not that the beauties of his wife had become wearisome, but that the mode of his life was an oppression to him; his error had become in part apparent to his perceptions; he saw that he could never lift himself from the earth; though perpetually

obtaining much admiration from King Francis, and among the many others which had been despatched to him from Rome, Venice, and Lombardy, these had been adjudged to be by far the best. That monarch therefore, praising them very highly, was told that he might easily prevail on Andrea to visit France, when he might enter the service of His Majesty; this proposal was exceedingly agreeable to the king, who therefore gave orders that everything needful should be done for that purpose, and that a sum of money for the expenses of the journey should be paid to Andrea in Florence. The latter gladly set forth on his way to France accordingly, taking with him his scholar Andrea Sguazzella.

Having in due time arrived at the French court, they were received by the monarch very amicably and with many favours; even the first day of his arrival was marked to Andrea by proofs of that magnanimous sovereign's liberality and courtesy, since he at once received not only a present of money, but the added gift of very rich and honourable vestments. He soon afterwards commenced his labours, rendering himself so acceptable to the king as well as to the whole court, and receiving so many proofs of good-will from all, that his departure from his native country soon appeared to our artist to have conducted him from the extreme of wretchedness to the summit of felicity. One of Andrea's first works in France was the portrait of the Dauphin,

toiling; he did so to no purpose. He had the father and all the sisters of his wife devouring everything he gained, and though well accustomed to that burthen he could not be insensible to the weight thereof, and he finally became tired of the life he was leading. Knowing this, some friend, who still loved him, though more perhaps as an artist than as a man, advised him to change his dwelling, leaving his wife in some more secure abode for a time, that so he might at a future period receive her again, when they might live in a manner more creditable to him. He had hardly been brought to a conviction of his error, and to the persuasion that something should be done towards the discovery of a remedy, when such an occasion for reinstating himself was presented to him as he had never had before, since the time when he had taken a wife. The two pictures which he had sent into France," etc., etc.



the son of the king, a child born but a few months previously, and still in his swathing bands; wherefore, having taken this painting to the king, he received in return three hundred ducats of gold.

Continuing his labours, he afterwards painted a figure of Charity for King Francis; this was considered an exceedingly beautiful picture, and was held by that monarch in all the estimation due to so admirable a work. From that time the king commanded that a very considerable income should be annually paid to Andrea, doing his utmost to induce the painter to remain contentedly at his court, and promising that he should never want for anything that he could desire; and this happened because the promptitude of Andrea in his works, and the easy character of the man, who was satisfied with everything around him, were both agreeable to King Francis; he gave very great satisfaction to the whole court also, painting numerous pictures and executing various works of different kinds for the nobles.

And now, had Andrea del Sarto only reflected on all that he had escaped from, and duly weighed the advantageous character of that position to which fate had conducted him, I make no doubt but that, to say nothing of riches, he might have attained to great honours. But one day being employed on the figure of a St. Jerome doing penance, which he was painting for the mother of the king, there came to him certain letters from Florence; these were written to him by his wife,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of the *Lives*, the circumstances of Andrea's departure from France, and his return to Florence, are related as follows:—"One day he received a letter, after having had many others, from Lucrezia his wife, whom he had left disconsolate for his departure, although she wanted for nothing. Andrea had even ordered a house to be built for them behind the Nunziata, giving her hopes that he might return at any moment; yet as she could not give money to her kindred and connexions, as she had previously done, she wrote with bitter complaints to Andrea, declaring that she never ceased to weep, and was in perpetual affliction at his absence; dressing all this up with sweet words, well calculated to move the heart of the luckless man, who loved her but too well, she drove the poor soul half out of his wits; above all,



and from that time (whatever may have been the cause) he began to think of leaving France; he asked permission to that effect from the French king accordingly, saying that he desired to return to Florence, but that when he had arranged his affairs in that city he would return without fail to his majesty; he added, that when he came back his wife should accompany him, to the end that he might remain in France the more quietly; and that he would bring with him pictures and sculptures of great value. The king, confiding in these promises, gave him money for the purchase of those pictures and sculptures, Andrea taking an oath on the gospels to return within the space of a few months, and that done he departed to his native city.

He arrived safely in Florence, enjoying the society of his beautiful wife and that of his friends, with the sight of his native city during several months; but when the period specified by the king, and that at which he ought to have returned, had come and passed, he found himself at the end, not only of his own money, but what with building, indulging himself in various pleasures and doing no work, of that belonging to the French monarch also, the whole of which he had consumed. He was nevertheless determined to return to France, but the prayers and tears of his wife had more power than his own

when he read her assurance that if he did not return speedily, he would certainly find her dead. Moved by all this, he resolved to resume his chain, and preferred a life of wretchedness with her to the ease around him, and to all the glory which his art must have secured to him. He was then too so richly provided with handsome vestments by the liberality of the king and his nobles, and found himself so magnificently arrayed, that every hour seemed a thousand years to him until he could go to show himself in his bravery to his beautiful wife. Taking the money which the king confided to him for the purchase of pictures, statues, and other fine things, he set off therefore, having first sworn on the gospels to return in a few months. Arrived happily in Florence, he lived joyously with his wife for some time, making large presents to her father and sisters, but doing nothing for his own parents, whom he would not even see, and who at the end of a certain period ended their lives in great poverty and misery."

necessities, or the faith which he had pledged to the king; he remained therefore in Florence, and the French monarch was so greatly angered thereby that for a long time after he would not look at the paintings of Florentine masters, and declared that if Andrea ever fell into his hands he would have no regard whatever to the distinction of his endowments, but would do him more harm than he had before done him good. Andrea del Sarto remained in Florence, therefore, as we have said, and from a highly eminent position he sank to the very lowest, procuring a livelihood and passing his time as he best might.

While his affairs were going on in this manner, Andrea could not fail sometimes to think of his conduct in the matter of the French king, when he would sigh from his heart, and if he could have hoped to receive pardon for the fault he had committed, I make no doubt but that he would have returned to the service of that monarch. Nay, by way of trying how far fortune might be favourable to him, he determined to make an attempt, whereby he should ascertain whether his abilities might not yet avail to restore him to favour. He consequently painted a figure of San Giovanni Battista, partially undraped, intending to despatch the same to France, to be presented to the Grand Master; yet, whatever the cause may have been I know not, but certain it is that Andrea never sent it; he sold the picture, on the contrary, to the illustrious Ottaviano de' Medici, by whom it was always held in high estimation to the end of his days.

In the year 1523 the plague appeared in Florence as well as in some parts of the surrounding country, when Andrea, desiring to withdraw himself from that peril, and at the same time wishing to continue his labours, was enabled by the intervention of Antonio Brancacci to repair to Mugello, there to paint a picture for the nuns of San Piero, of the order of Camaldoli, at Luco: he took with him his wife and her sister, with a step-daughter and one of his scholars. Remaining here therefore in quiet and safety, he set hand to the work, and as those venerable ladies were daily giving increasing proof of kindness and friendliness to his wife, himself, and the whole

party, Andrea set himself with infinite devotion to the execution of that picture, wherein he represented the Dead Christ mourned over by Our Lady, San Giovanni Evangelista and Santa Maria Maddalena, all figures so full of life that they appear indeed to be endowed with soul and spirit.

Having finished his work, Andrea continued, as the peril of the plague was not yet passed, to abide for some weeks in the same place, and the rather as he received so friendly a welcome, and found himself to be so well treated. During that time, and to the end that he might not remain idle, he painted a Visitation of Our Lady to St. Elizabeth.

For the brotherhood of San Jacopo, called Il Nicchio, Andrea del Sarto afterwards painted a banner to be carried in their processions; the subject chosen was San Jacopo, who is caressing a boy clothed in the habit of the Flagellants; there is also a second boy holding a book in his hand, and portrayed in a manner which is very natural and graceful. He likewise depicted the portrait of an Intendant of the monks of Vallombrosa, who constantly made his abode in the country, for the purpose of attending to the affairs of his monastery; the picture was placed beneath an arbour of vines, around which the Intendant had arranged shady walks and many contrivances after his own fancy, but where it was somewhat exposed to wind and weather: so it was, nevertheless, that the Intendant, who was a friend of Andrea, would have it.

When Andrea had finished this work, he found that certain colours and other materials were left remaining, whereupon he took up a tile and calling his wife, Lucrezia, he said to her, "Come hither, wife, and since we have these colours left, I will take your portrait, that all may see how well you have preserved your good looks even at this time of your life, but also that it may be likewise seen to how great an extent your features have altered, and how widely different this portrait will therefore be from those made at an earlier period." But the woman would not remain still, perhaps because she had other things in her head at the moment; and Andrea, as though almost divining that his end was near, took a mirror and drew his own

portrait on that tile instead, executing the same so naturally and to such perfection that one might almost believe him to be in life. This portrait is now in the possession of the above-named Madonna Lucrezia his wife, who still survives.

In the last years of his life Andrea lived in much familiarity with some of those who governed in the Brotherhood of San Sebastiano, which has its abode behind the monastery of the Servites; he consequently painted for that Brotherhood a figure of San Sebastiano in half-length, which is so beautiful that it might well have been supposed likely to prove the last stroke of a pencil that he was to make. The siege of Florence was now at an end, and Andrea was in constant expectation of seeing matters take a more favourable turn, although he had but little hope of success for his attempt, as regarded his re-admission to the favour of the French King, seeing that Giovanni Battista Palla had even then been taken prisoner. But when Florence was filled by the soldiers of the camp, together with the stores of food that were then brought in, there came certain Lansquenets among the other corps of the soldiery, and some of these were infected with the plague; this caused no slight alarm in the city, and the terror thus awakened was quickly followed by the pest itself, which those troops left behind them

Now whether anxiety respecting this misfortune affected the health of Andrea, or whether it were that, after the want and privations which he had suffered during the siege, he had committed some excess in eating; certain it is, that he one day felt seriously ill, and laid himself in his bed as one whose doom was pronounced: no remedy was found for his disease, nor were many cares bestowed on him, his wife withdrawing herself from him as much as she could, being moved by her fear of the pest. Thus he died, and as it is said, almost without any one being aware of it; and in the same manner was interred with few ceremonies by the men of the Barefooted Brotherhood in the church of the Servites, which was near to his house, and where it was the custom to bury all who belong to that Brotherhood.

The death of Andrea was a great loss to his native city and



to the art he practised, seeing that up to the age of forty-two, which he had attained, he had continually proceeded from one work to another with a constant amelioration of his manner, insomuch that the longer he had lived, the more he would have benefited his art: and much better is it to proceed thus, step by step, gradually but surely acquiring power, and advancing with a foot which becomes evermore stronger and firmer, towards the mastery of all difficulties, than to attempt the compulsion of nature and genius by sudden efforts. Nor is it to be doubted that Andrea, if he had remained in Rome, when he went thither to see the works of Raffaello and Michelagnolo, and to examine the statues and ruins of that city—had he then remained in Rome, I say, he would without doubt have greatly enriched his manner as regarded style of composition, and would eventually have attained the power of imparting a more elevated character and increased force to his figures, which are qualities that have never been perfectly acquired by any but those who have been for some time in Rome, studying and carefully labouring in presence of the marvels therein contained. Andrea del Sarto more particularly had received from nature so graceful and soft a manner in design, with a mode of colouring so life-like and easy, as well in fresco as in oil, that all were firmly persuaded of the success that must have attended him had he remained in Rome; and there are not wanting those who affirm that he would in that case, without doubt, have surpassed all the artists of his time.<sup>1</sup>

It is the opinion of some persons that Andrea was prevented from settling himself in Rome by the discouragement which the sight of the works executed there, whether in sculpture or painting, and ancient as well as modern, occasioned him, a feeling that was further increased by the numerous disciples of Raffaello and other young artists, whom he perceived to possess great power in design, and saw executing their works with a

<sup>1</sup> "There is a bit of a mannikin in Florence," observed Michael Angelo to Raphael, "who, if he had chanced to be employed in great undertakings as you have happened to be, would compel you to look well about you."

bold and firm hand which knew neither doubt nor difficulty. All this, timid as he was, deprived Andrea of courage to make trial of himself, it caused him to distrust his own powers, and he decided that for him it would be better to return to Florence, where, recalling with care and reflecting at his leisure on all that he had seen, he profited to such a degree that his works are, and ever have been, held in the highest estimation; they have indeed been more frequently copied and imitated since his death than while he lived; they are highly prized by those who possess them, and all who have been willing to sell them have received three times as much for the work as was paid for it to the artist, who never demanded more than a very small price.

Two reasons may be given for the circumstances just alluded to: first, the timidity of disposition, which, as I have said, was natural to Andrea; and secondly, the fact that certain of the masters in wood-work, who at that time were most commonly employed to superintend the best works in the dwellings of the citizens, would never oblige their friends by giving Andrea any work to execute, unless they knew that he was at the time in very great need of money, when he would content himself with the meanest price. Be this as it may, these things do not deprive his paintings of their value, nor prevent them from being, as they are, most admirable. Nor do they affect the estimation in which they are held; very great account is made of them, and very deservedly, seeing that Andrea was certainly one of the greatest and best masters that the world has yet seen.

## MADONNA PROPERZIA DE' ROSSI.

[BORN 1490?—DIED 1530.]

IT is a remarkable fact, that whenever women have at any time devoted themselves to the study of any art or the exercise of any talent, they have for the most part acquitted themselves well, and have even acquired fame, a circumstance of which innumerable examples might easily be adduced. There is no one to whom their excellence in the general economy of life is unknown, but even in warlike enterprises they have sometimes been seen to distinguish themselves, as witness, Camilla, Arpalice, Valasca, Tomiris, Panthesilea, Molpadia, Orithya, Antiope, Hippolyta, Semiramis, Zenobia, and, finally, Mark Antony's Fulvia, who so frequently armed herself, as the historian Dion informs us, in her husband's defence as well as her own.

In poetry, too, women have sometimes been known to win admiration, as Pausanias relates. Corinna was highly celebrated in the art of versification; and Eustathius, in the enumeration which he gives of the ships of Homer (as does also Eusebius in his Book of the Times), makes mention of the honoured and youthful Sappho, who of a verity, although she was a woman, was nevertheless such a one that she surpassed by very far all the eminent writers of that age. So also doth Varro, with all unwonted and yet well-merited praise, exalt Erinna, who with three hundred verses opposed herself to the glorious fame of the brightest luminary of Greece, and with a small volume of her own making, called Elecate, counterpoised the widely-grasping *Iliad* of the great Homer. Aristophanes has celebrated Carissena as most accomplished in the

same art, upholding her to be a most learned and most eminent lady; and as much may be said for Theano, Mirone, Polla, Elpis, Cornisicia, and Telisilla, to the last of whom a very beautiful statue was erected in the Temple of Venus, as a testimony of the admiration in which she was held for her extraordinary abilities

But, to say nothing of the many other poetesses who might be enumerated, do we not read that in the difficult studies of philosophy, Arete was the teacher of the learned Aristippus? and were not Lastenia and Assiotea the disciples of the divine Plato? In the art of oratory, the Roman ladies Sempronia and Hortensia were much renowned; in grammar, according to Athenæus, Agallis attained to high distinction; and in the prediction of things future, or if you please to call it so, in astrology and magic, Themis, Cassandra, and Manto acquired the greatest fame in their day, as did Isis and Ceres in matters connected with agriculture; while the daughters of Thespius received universal applause for their attainments in all the sciences.

But, it is certain that at no period of the world's history has the truth of the assertion which we have made above been rendered more clearly manifest than in the present, wherein the highest fame has been acquired by women, not only in the study of letters, as in the instance of the Signora Vittoria del Vasto, the Signora Veronica Gambara, the Signora Catarina Anguisciola, Schioppa, Nugarola, Madonna Laura Battiferra, and a hundred others, who are most learned; not in the vulgar tongue only, and in Latin and Greek, but in every other walk of science. Nay, there are who have not disdained to contend, as it were, with us for the vaunt and palm of superiority in a different arena, and have set themselves, with their white and delicate hands, to mechanical, or speaking more exactly, to manual labours, forcing from the rigidity of marble, and from the sharp asperity of iron, that fame which was the desire of their hearts, and succeeding in the attainment of its highest eminence, as did our Properzia de' Rossi of Bologna, a maiden of rich gifts, who was equally excellent with others in the disposition



of all household matters, while she gained a point of distinction in many sciences well calculated to awaken the envy, not of women only, but of men also.

Properzia was distinguished by remarkable beauty of person. She sang and played on musical instruments better than any woman of her day, in the city of Bologna: being endowed with much fancy and admirable facility in the realisation of her ideas, she set herself to carve peach stones, a labour wherein she displayed such extraordinary skill and patience that the results thereof were marvellous to behold; and that, not for the subtlety of the work only, but for the graceful elegance of the minute figures thus represented, and for the able manner in which they were grouped. It is without doubt a remarkable thing to see the whole history of the Crucifixion exhibited on so small a surface as that presented by the stone of a peach, comprising too, as do those executed by Properzia, a vast number of figures, besides those of the executioners and the Apostles, and, what is more than all, exhibiting the most delicate treatment of each figure, with a truly admirable arrangement of all.

Encouraged by her success in these attempts, Properzia resolved to apply to the superintendent of works to the cathedral for a portion of the labours to be executed, when the three doors of the principal façade of San Petronio were to be decorated with figures in marble. This she did through the medium of her husband, and to that application the superintendents returned a favourable reply, declaring themselves willing to entrust her with a portion of the work, but first requiring to see some specimen in marble of what she could perform. Properzia thereupon immediately commenced a bust in the finest marble for the Count Alessandro de' Pepoli; this represented the father of that noble, Count Guido Pepoli; it was taken from the life, and gave infinite satisfaction, not only to the Pepoli family, but also to the whole city. The sculptress consequently received a commission from the superintendents, who immediately gave her a portion of the work, wherein she produced a most admirable representation, to the delight and astonishment of all Bologna. The subject chosen was the Wife of Pharaoh's

Steward, who, having become enamoured of his servant Joseph, and falling into despair at the repulse received from him, is seeking to detain him by taking hold of his garment, an action to which the sculptress has given a feminine gracefulness of inexpressible beauty; it is indeed reported that the unhappy woman was herself at that time in love with a very handsome young man, who seems to have cared but little for her, and she is supposed to have expressed her own feelings in this story of the Old Testament, which gave her great satisfaction, and was considered by all to be singularly beautiful.

But Properzia would never execute any other work for that building, seeing that although entreated by many persons to continue her labours therein, yet being constantly discouraged by Maestro Amico, who was not among those by whom she was requested to persevere, but who spoke ill of her on the contrary to the superintendents; she would, as I have said, work no more for that edifice; and so powerful was the malignity with which she was assailed, that the wardens would pay her but a very wretched price for her labours. It is true that there are two angels of most beautiful proportions, and in fine relief, by the hand of Properzia, which are still to be seen in San Petronio, but these were done entirely against her will. She ultimately devoted her attention to copper-plate engraving, wherein she succeeded to admiration, and was highly extolled; the poor enamoured young woman was indeed most perfectly successful in all things, with the exception of her unhappy love.

The fame of this noble and elevated genius becoming noised abroad, soon extended through all Italy, and reaching the ears of Pope Clement VII., that Pontiff, immediately after having performed the coronation of the emperor at Bologna, made inquiry after the sculptress, but it was found that the unfortunate woman had died in that very week, and had been buried in the hospital called Della Morte, as she had requested to be in her last will. Pope Clement, who had greatly desired to see Properzia, was sorry to hear of her death, but much more deeply grieved were her fellow-citizens, who while she lived had held her to be one of the greatest miracles of nature that has been produced

in our times. Her portrait was procured for and sent to me by certain painters who were among the most intimate of her friends.

But there have not wanted women who have equalled Properzia in design, although she drew very well, and have performed works in painting quite as meritorious as those executed by her in sculpture. Among these is first to be considered the Sister Plautilla, a nun, and now prioress in the convent of Santa Caterina of Siena, which is situate on the Piazza di San Marco in Florence, who, beginning to draw, from small commencements gradually proceeded to copy the works of the best masters, and ultimately attained the power of producing such performances, that she has awakened astonishment even in artists themselves. But this venerable and well-endowed Sister, before she had begun to execute works of importance, had occupied herself with miniature painting: in this department of art therefore many very beautiful little pictures by her hand may still be seen in the possession of different persons, but of these it is not needful that I should make further mention. The best of the Sister Plautilla's works are without doubt those that she has copied from others, but from these it is manifest that she would have effected admirable things if she had been able to study as men do, from the life, and had been furnished with the advantages of various kinds which the student in design acquires in drawing from nature, etc. The truth of this observation may be perceived clearly from a picture of the Nativity of Christ copied by Sister Plautilla from one which was painted by Bronzino for Filippo Salviati, and is furthermore made manifest by the fact that the figures and faces of women, whom she could study at her pleasure, are much more satisfactorily rendered in her works than are those of men, and have a much closer resemblance to the truth of nature.

In like manner, and to her great praise and glory, has Madonna Lucrezia, the daughter of Messer Alfonso Quistelli della Mirandola, devoted and still devotes herself to drawing and painting, under the guidance of Alessandro Allori. This lady,

who is now the wife of the Count Clemente Pietra, has produced works which, as may be seen by many pictures and portraits by her hand, are worthy of commendation from all. But with more zeal and in a more graceful manner than any other woman of our time, has the Cremonese Sophonisba, daughter of Messer Annibale Anguisciola, laboured in these our arts; for not only does she design, paint from the life, and copy the works of others with the most consummate skill and the most perfect success, but has of herself composed and executed most admirable works of her own invention in painting. It has thus happened that Philip, king of Spain, having heard of the extraordinary merits and endowments of Sophonisba, from the Signor Duke of Alba, has sent for her and caused her to be conducted in the most honourable manner into that country, where he retains her near the person of the queen, with a very large stipend; she is there regarded with admiration by the whole court, every one considering the excellence and distinction of Sophonisba as something wonderful.

No long time has indeed elapsed since Messer Tommaso Cavalieri, a Roman gentleman, sent to the Signor Duke Cosimo, besides a drawing of Cleopatra from the hand of the divine Michelagnolo, another drawing executed by Sophonisba; the work represents a little girl, who is laughing at a boy, because the latter, having plunged his hand into a basket of crabs, which she has held out to him, is caught by one of them, which is pinching his finger, and the boy is weeping and bemoaning his pain. Wherefore, as a memorial of Sophonisba, of whose works, since she is dwelling in Spain, Italy possesses no copy, I have placed this drawing in my book of designs.

Truly may we affirm, then, with the divine Ariosto, that

“Women have risen to high excellence  
In every art whereto they give their care.”

And this shall be the end of the life of Properzia, the sculptress of Bologna.



## ROSSO.

[BORN 1496—DIED 1541.]

WHEN able men devote themselves to some particular study, and pursue the same with all the power of their minds, they are sometimes, and at a moment when it was least expected, exalted before the eyes of all men, and called to distinguished honours, as was exemplified, after many labours endured in his vocation, in the case of the Florentine painter, Rosso. It is true that his abilities did not receive their due appreciation from those who might have worthily rewarded them in Rome and Florence; but in France, on the other hand, they were so fully acknowledged, that the glory he there acquired might well have sufficed to quench the utmost thirst of fame.

In addition to his gifts as a painter, Rosso was endowed with great personal advantages; he was graceful and impressive in discourse, was an excellent musician, and possessed extensive acquirements in philosophy. As respects his own art, the quality more to be prized than all others by which he was distinguished was the truly poetical character which he constantly imparted to all the figures in his various compositions. In design he was bold and firm; his manner was exceedingly graceful; he displayed extraordinary force in all cases demanding that quality, and gave further proof of his ability in the admirable grouping of his figures. The architectural works of Rosso are singularly meritorious, and in all things, however poor his condition, he ever proved himself rich in spirit, and replete with greatness of mind. Wherefore, whoever shall pursue the manner adopted in his works by this artist, may be certain that his labours shall be for ever renowned, as were those of Rosso,

which in respect of boldness have not their equal; they show no trace of an over-laboured effort, and are wholly free from that dryness and tedium to which so many subject themselves, in the hope of bringing their works from their real nothingness to the appearance of something great.

Rosso studied drawing in his youth from the Cartoon of Michelagnolo, and would follow but very few of the masters in art, having a certain opinion of his own, which did not entirely accord with the manner pursued by them.

Having received a commission for a picture from the Director of the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, Rosso commenced the sketch accordingly; but in this there were many faces to which the artist had given a wild and desperate-looking air in the sketch, as was his custom, but which he afterwards invariably softened and brought to the proper degree of expression in the finished work. But the Director, seeing this, and having very little acquaintance with matters of art, thought all the saints sketched in the picture no better than so many demons, and he rushed out of the house declaring that the artist had deceived him, and that he would have nothing to do with such a picture.

Having completed various labours in Florence, Rosso set off for Rome with Battistino and an ape, in whose pranks he took great delight. Much expectation had been awakened respecting him in that city, and his works were earnestly sought for, some of the drawings made by him having already been seen and acknowledged to be most beautiful, as they doubtless were, seeing that Rosso drew to admiration. In the church of the Pace, therefore, he painted a picture over those executed by Raffaello, than which he never depicted a worse in all his days. Nor can I conceive whence this has proceeded, unless we are to conclude that in his case, as in that of many others, we have an instance of a fact which appears to me to be a very extraordinary thing, and one of the secret wonders of nature, that many persons, namely, when they change their country and place, appear to change their character and modes of life also, insomuch that they sometimes no more appear like themselves, but like some others, and not unfrequently are as people be-

wildered and stultified. Now this may have happened to Rosso in the air of Rome, where he beheld the works in architecture and sculpture, the pictures and statues of Michelagnolo, which may have disturbed his self-possession, producing on him the effect perceived in Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto, who were driven by the discouragement they experienced in Rome to flee from that city, without having left therein any work to serve as a memorial of their visit.

Meanwhile the sack of the city took place, and the unfortunate Rosso was made prisoner by the Germans, from whom he received grievous maltreatment, seeing that, besides despoiling him of his clothing, they compelled him to go barefoot, and without any covering on his head, to the shop of a victualler, whose whole stock they forced him to bear away at repeated visitations on his bare back. Thus ill-treated by his captors, but not closely watched by them, he contrived with great pains to escape to Perugia, where he was most amicably received and supplied with clothing by the painter Domenico di Paris, for whom he designed a cartoon for a picture of the Magi, which is a most beautiful thing, and may now be seen in the house of Domenico.

Rosso afterwards accepted a commission for a picture to be painted at the Città di Castello; but while preparing the ground for commencing his work, a roof falling on the place wherein it had been placed, destroyed it entirely, and as Rosso was at that time attacked by so violent a fever that he was on the point of death, he caused himself to be transported from Castello to Borgo. His malady afterwards changing to a quartan fever, he proceeded to the Deanery of San Stefano for change of air, and finally departed to Arezzo, where he was received into the house of Benedetto Spadari.

Now the people of Castello, from whom Rosso had received the commission for a picture, were anxious that he should finish his work, but, remembering the sickness he had endured there, the master would not return to Castello; he completed their picture at Borgo therefore, nor would he ever permit them to enjoy the pleasure of seeing it while in course of execution. The

subject represented was a vast crowd of men with Our Saviour Christ in the air receiving the adoration of four figures: in this picture the artist depicted Moors, Gypsies, and the most singular things in the world, insomuch that with the exception of the figures, which are perfect, he may be truly said to have considered anything in this composition but the wish of those who had ordered the work. While occupied therewith, Rosso disinterred dead bodies from the burial-ground of the Episcopal palace, in which he had his abode, and made very fine anatomical studies: this master was of a truth very zealous in the study of all things appertaining to his art, and few days passed wherein he did not paint some nude figure from the life.

Rosso had always expressed a desire to end his days in France, in order to deliver himself, as he said, from a certain poverty and need of condition to which those men are so frequently subjected who pass their lives labouring in Tuscany, or in whatsoever country it may be wherein they were born. He therefore determined to depart, and with this end in view he had even studied the Latin tongue, hoping thereby to appear more competent in all matters, and to obtain the reputation of more extended acquirements. Now it so chanced that an occurrence took place whereby he was induced to hasten his departure, and that happened on this wise. Having gone with one of his disciples on the evening of Holy Thursday to be present at the ceremonies in a church some short distance out of Arezzo, the boy made a shower of sparks and flame with a lighted match and some tar, at the very moment when what is called "the darkness" was in course of proceeding. Thereupon certain priests reproached and even struck the child, which Rosso, who had the boy seated beside him, perceiving, started up in great anger with the priests. An uproar ensuing, and no one knowing how the disturbance had arisen, swords were drawn on poor Rosso, who was seen to be in strife with the ecclesiastics, and he was compelled to take flight. It is true that he gained his own rooms in safety, and without being injured or even overtaken by any one; but he nevertheless considered himself to have been affronted, and having finished the picture which



he was then working at for the people of Castello, he set off in the night without regarding the contract into which he had entered with the Aretines, and leaving their commission, for which he had already received a hundred and fifty scudi, unfulfilled: nor did he in any way trouble himself with the injury which he was doing to Giovan Antonio, who had become security for him.

Taking the road by Pesaro, our artist repaired to Venice, and there, being entertained by Messer Pietro of Arezzo, he made a drawing for Messer Pietro, on a sheet of paper, which was afterwards engraved, and wherein he represented Mars sleeping; with Venus, the Loves and the Graces, who despoil the God of his arms and are bearing off his cuirass. Leaving Venice, Rosso then proceeded to France, where he was received with many marks of friendship by those of the Florentine people abiding there. Here, having painted certain pictures, which were afterwards placed in the gallery at Fontainebleau, he presented the same to the King Francis, whom they pleased infinitely, but still more acceptable to that monarch were the appearance, manners, and discourse of Rosso, who was tall and majestic in person, of a ruddy complexion, as was expressed by his name, and in all his actions of a grave, commanding, and thoughtful presence, giving evidence at all times of much judgment and ability.

The king at once appointed him a stipend of four hundred crowns per annum, and also presented him with a house in Paris, but this he did not often occupy, remaining for the greater part of his time at Fontainebleau. There he had apartments in the palace, and lived in the manner of a gentleman, the king having made him chief and superintendent over all the buildings, paintings, and other decorations of that place, where Rosso commenced the construction of a gallery over the lower court

No long time had elapsed before his Majesty presented the painter with a Canonicate in the Holy Chapel of the Madonna of Paris, with other revenues and marks of kindness, insomuch that Rosso lived in the fashion of a nobleman with a large

number of servants and horses, giving fine banquets, and showing all manner of courtesies to his friends and acquaintance, but more especially to the Italian strangers who chanced to arrive there.

Some short time before his death the king had raised his income to more than a thousand crowns yearly, in addition to all that he received for his separate labours, which must have been very considerable; he therefore no longer lived in the manner of a painter, but rather in that of a prince, having numerous servants, many horses, and a house furnished with tapestries, silver utensils, and other muniments and possessions of great value. But Fortune, which seldom or never permits those who confide too much in her promises to remain long in an exalted condition, brought this artist to destruction in the strangest manner imaginable. And that happened on this wise. While Rosso was in the frequent habit of familiarly receiving the visits of the Florentine Francesco di Pellegrino, who greatly delighted in painting and was very intimate with Rosso, the latter was robbed of some hundreds of ducats, when, believing that no other than Francesco could have done this, he caused him to be apprehended and brought before the courts, where he was subjected to a very rigorous examination and put to the torture. But Francesco, who knew himself to be innocent, confessing nothing, was finally released, and moved by a just anger, felt compelled to resent the injurious charge which Rosso had brought against him. Wherefore, having made his complaint for the wrong committed, Francesco pressed him so closely, that finding no help and having no defence to offer, Rosso beheld himself reduced to a very evil plight, manifestly perceiving that he had not only falsely accused his friend, but blighted his own honour, while the retractation of his words, or the adoption of any other method then within his power, would leave him equally in danger of being called a treacherous and worthless man; wherefore he determined to take his own life rather than abide any punishment that might be inflicted on him by others.

One day, therefore, when the king was at Fontainebleau,

Rosso sent a countryman to Paris for a poisonous liquid, pretending to require the same for the preparation of colours or varnishes, but with the resolution to poison himself therewith, as in effect he did. And such was the malignity of the poison thus used, that the countryman, having held his thumb on the phial, was on the point of losing that member, seeing that the venom, although well corked and covered with wax, had nevertheless so deadly a force as to corrode the finger, which was not saved without difficulty. This poison Rosso took, and being then in perfect health he yet died a few hours after having taken it, the venom killing him, as it was his purpose that it should do.

When the news of this event was taken to the king, it caused him indescribable regret, since it was his opinion that in losing Rosso he had been deprived of the most excellent artist of his time. But to the end that the works undertaken might not remain unfinished, he caused them to be continued by the Bolognese Francesco Primaticcio, who had already performed various labours for him, as we have said, and to whom he gave a good abbey as he had given Rosso a canonicate.

## AMICO ASPERTINI.

[BORN 1475—DIED 1552 ?]

THE Bolognese Amico was a self-willed and eccentric man ; the figures of Amico also are in like manner contorted and half wild, so to speak. Examples of these capricious performances may be seen in many parts of Italy, but more particularly in Bologna, where he spent the greater part of his time.

But if Amico had followed up the many pains which he gave himself in drawing, with an execution of the true and right kind, and not as chance and caprice dictated, he might perhaps have passed beyond many who have been considered able artists ; so much is done by mere persistence, that among the works of a master who has produced large numbers, it is almost impossible but that something good should be found, and such, accordingly, among the many by this artist, is the façade of a building which he painted in fresco, on the piazza of the Marsigli. It presents numerous divisions, in which are represented stories, and above these is a frieze of animals engaged in combat ; these last are depicted with great spirit and boldness, and may be considered the best work ever produced by this master. He likewise executed the frieze around the principal chapel of San Salvatore ; but this is so extravagant and absurd in every part that it might well make a man laugh, even when he was most disposed to weep. In a word, there is scarcely a church or street in Bologna which does not exhibit some daub from the hand of Amico. This artist painted not a little in Rome also ; and in the church of San Friano, at Lucca, he decorated a chapel, which, with many strange and extravagant fancies, has some things worthy of praise.



When the Emperor Charles V visited Bologna, Amico erected an Arch of Triumph at the gate of the palace ; and if, in works of this kind, Amico displayed more aptitude than some other masters have done, that can occasion no surprise, if we remember that he is said to have wandered over all Italy, like an eccentric and singular person as he was, drawing and copying everything that he could find, whether in painting or relief, and whether a good work or a bad one ; thus he could scarcely fail to acquire a certain amount of facility in practice. But it is reported of Amico, that when he discovered anything fit for his purposes, he gladly laid his hands upon it, but destroyed or spoiled it after he had done, that none other might avail himself thereof. And the result of all his pains and labours was the strange and fantastic manner which we see.

Having reached the age of seventy, while still pursuing this extraordinary mode of life, and eccentric manner in art, Amico finally became quite mad. Messer Francesco Guicciardini, a noble Florentine, and the veracious historian of his own times, who was then at the head of the government in Bologna, found much amusement in the singularities of this artist, as did the whole city of Bologna. Many persons are nevertheless of opinion that this madness of his was mingled with a certain amount of craft and cunning. He once, while half crazed, and in very great need, sold some of his goods at a very low price, but after a time, and when he had somewhat recovered himself, he demanded to have them restored to him, and did accordingly obtain the restitution of the same, under certain conditions, having sold them, as he averred, while in a state of complete insanity ; whereas the case may have been totally different. Not that I will affirm it to have been thus ; but what I may say is, that I have many times heard it so related.

Amico gave a certain portion of his time to sculpture, and executed, as he best might, a group in marble for the church of San Petronio. The subject of this work is the Dead Christ supported by Nicodemus, and Amico treated it in the manner which he had adopted for his paintings. This artist was in the habit of painting with both hands at the same time, holding the

pencil with the lighter tints in one hand, and that with the darker colours in the other, but the best of all, and what was more laughable than anything else, was the fact that he would bind a leather girdle round his waist, and would have this hung about with little pots filled with colours prepared for use, in such sort that he looked like the Devil of San Macario, with all those bottles of his; and when he was thus working, with his spectacles on his nose, he was a figure that might have made the very stones laugh, more particularly when he began to chatter, for Amico would gabble enough for twenty men, and as he said the strangest things in the world, his manner of proceeding was a perpetual jest. It is true that he never spoke well of any one, however distinguished by excellence and ability, or however well endowed, whether by nature or the gifts of fortune. His best delight was, as we have said, in gossip. One evening, about the time of the Ave Maria, Amico met another painter of Bologna who had been buying cabbages in the market, and whom he kept listening to his stories and talk of various kinds beneath the loggia of the Podestà until the night was almost spent, the poor man not being able to find any means of delivering himself from his prate. At length, and when the day was almost on the point of appearing, Amico exclaimed, "There, get away, and boil thy cabbage, for the time is getting on." Many other jests and follies of a similar kind are related of Amico, but of these I will make no further mention.

## FRANCIA BIGIO.

[BORN 1482—DIED 1525.]

FOR a good and just cause this master devoted himself to the art of painting, labouring therein, not so much because he was desirous of fame, as that he might thus be enabled to render assistance to his indigent relations, for Francia Bigio was born of poor artisans in a very low condition.<sup>1</sup> Anxious to deliver himself from the disadvantages of his station, he was furthermore compelled to effort by his competition with Andrea del Sarto, who was at first his companion, and with whom he for a long time shared his dwelling and passed his life; these artists then painting in company, a mode of proceeding which served as an impulse to both, and caused them to make great progress in the art of painting.

In his early youth, Francia Bigio made his abode for some months with Mariotto Albertinelli, from whom he acquired the first principles of his art; he was more particularly disposed to the study of perspective, and devoting himself continually to this from the pleasure that he found in it, he obtained the reputation in Florence, even during his youth, of being very competent therein. And of a truth, although the manner of Francia Bigio may be considered somewhat feeble, from the fact that he performed his works laboriously and with too much solicitude; he was nevertheless remarkably exact in observing the proportions demanded by art in all his figures, and was most careful in every respect.

<sup>1</sup> He was the son of a Milanese weaver.

In the cloister of the Servites which precedes the church is a picture which Francia Bigio was commissioned to execute in competition with Andrea del Sarto. Now it happened that the Servite monks, on the occasion of a certain festival for which they were preparing, desired that the paintings of Andrea del Sarto and those of Francia Bigio should be uncovered for their feast; and as Francia had completed his work from the basement upwards on the night before the festival, these fathers, presuming and rash as they were, took it upon them to remove the coverings; not considering, in their ignorance of art, that Francia would most probably desire to retouch or improve the painting. In the morning, therefore, when the pictures of Andrea and those of Francia were alike displayed, the news was soon carried to Francia, who was informed that his work, as well as that of Andrea, had been uncovered: this intelligence caused him such excessive vexation, nay, it grieved him so much, that he felt as one who was about to die; but immediately after, conceiving a violent rage against the monks for their presumption, and for the want of consideration which they had shown him, he hurried to the place at his utmost speed, and having mounted the scaffolding which had not yet been removed, although the painting was uncovered, he took up one of the masons' hammers which was lying there, beat the heads of two female figures in pieces, ruined that of the Madonna, and then falling on the nude figure, which was breaking the rod, he tore it almost entirely from the wall.

The monks hastened to the cloister at the uproar that ensued, and aided by certain of the laymen standing round, they succeeded in restraining the hands of the painter, that he might not entirely destroy the whole work; but although they afterwards offered him double payment to restore his picture, yet the dislike he had conceived against them was such that he would never consent to do so. The reverence felt by other painters for the author of so admirable a work, as well as for the work itself, has in like manner withheld them from attempting its restoration, thus none have been found willing to finish it, for which reason it still remains in the condition I have described,



as a memorial of the circumstance just related. So admirably is this fresco painted, meanwhile, such extraordinary care, so much love, and such beautiful freshness does it display, that Francia Bigio may be truly affirmed to have worked in fresco better than any man of his time ; no one of them understanding so well as himself that application of fixed tempera colours by which he secured harmony and softness to his paintings ; wherefore he has well merited to be extolled and held in the highest estimation for this as well as for others of his works.

But to return to Francia ; so zealously and with so much delight did this master study his art, that there was no day through the summer months wherein he did not copy some nude figure from the life in his work-rooms, and to this end he kept persons constantly in his pay. At Santa Maria Nuova, Francia Bigio made an anatomical preparation of the whole human form, at the request of the eminent Florentine physician, Maestro Andrea Pasquali, and this caused the artist himself to make a great improvement in the practice of his art, which he ever continued to pursue with constantly increasing love.

This artist was not ashamed of doing anything that appertained to his art, but would work at all manner of paintings and refused no work that was proposed to him, whence it sometimes happened that the hand of the master was given to objects of very inferior character ; thus, for the cloth-weaver, Arcangelo, whose dwelling is by the Porta Rossa, Francia Bigio painted a *Noli me Tangere* of extraordinary beauty on a tower which served this man as a terrace. He also executed other works of similar kind, seeing that his disposition was exceedingly obliging and he was ever ready to do a kindness, but of these we need make no further mention.

This master was a great lover of peace, and for that reason would never marry, but was frequently repeating the trite proverb which declares that

“ He who takes a wife,  
May be sure of cares and strife.”

He would never leave Florence, and having seen some of the

works of Raffaello da Urbino, which caused him to feel that he was not equal to so great a man, nor yet to some others also of distinguished name, so he would never attempt a competition with artists of such excellence and renown. And of a truth, the most perfect wisdom and prudence to which a man can attain is that of knowing himself, and not presuming to think more of himself than his true value permits. Francia Bigio was not endowed by nature with great powers of invention, and the advantages which he possessed were acquired by long study and careful practice ; yet having laboured much, he also acquired much. This master died in the year 1524, at which time he had attained his forty-second year.

## MORTO DA FELTRO.

THE painter, Morto da Feltro, was a man of great eccentricity in his mode of life as well as of thinking, and equally singular was he in his inventions and in the arabesques which he executed, and which caused him to be very much esteemed. This artist, who was of a melancholy temperament, repaired to Rome in early youth. He perpetually studied the antiquities around him, and when he found compartments of vaultings or ranges of walls decorated with grottesche or arabesques, these he studied with untiring pleasure, for in such things he ever took delight; and so perfectly did he acquire the ancient manner of treating foliage, so exactly did he copy the mode of turning the leaves, observable in works of antiquity, that he was second to no master of his time in that particular. There was not a subterranean building in or about Rome that Morto did not frequent, to study the decorations of this character which might be contained in them; his search after such was incessant, and the vaultings which he examined were innumerable.

This artist remained for many months at Tivoli, where he took up his abode in the Villa Adriana, drawing all the pavements and grottoes therein, whether above the earth or beneath it; and hearing that at Pozzuoli, ten miles from the city of Naples, there were entire walls covered with ancient grottesche, in relief and stucco, as well as painted, which were considered very beautiful, he passed many months at that place also, constantly occupied with the same study. In this he gave himself no remission indeed, until he had copied everything, even to the smallest relic that he could find in the Campana, which is an ancient road or street in that place filled with antique sepulchral monuments. At Trullo, in like manner, which is near the sea-shore, Morto designed many of the Temples and buildings, those beneath the ground as well as those above. He likewise visited Baia and Mercato di Sábato, both places

wherein there are innumerable edifices, now ruined, but presenting examples of such works as were sought by Morto, and all of which he examined and copied with such enduring labour and patient love, that his abilities were largely increased by such devotion, and he profited to a vast extent both in power and knowledge.

Having returned to Rome, Morto laboured there several months, giving his attention entirely to figures, wherein he did not consider himself to be as efficient as he was held by others to be in the execution of arabesque ornaments or grottesche. Stimulated by his desire for improvement, therefore, and hearing the rumours of what Leonardo and Michelagnolo had accomplished for art by the cartoons which they had prepared in Florence, he at once departed for that city; but having seen the works, he became convinced that he could never attain to such a degree of perfection in that branch of art as he had already acquired in his own peculiar vocation, wherefore he again returned to labour at his arabesques or grottesche.

Becoming weary of his abode in Florence, Morto removed to Venice, where Giorgione da Castel Franco was at that time painting the Fondaco or cloth magazines of the Germans, when Morto set himself to assist in that work, of which he executed the ornaments. Thus he remained in that city several months, being enchained by the enjoyments and pleasures of sense which are always to be found therein.

He next repaired to Friuli, intending to exercise his profession there; but he had not been long in that place when the Venetian nobles beginning to engage soldiers, he also accepted their pay, and before he had become well acquainted with his new profession was made the captain of two hundred men. The army of the Venetians was at that time before Zara in Sclavonia; and Morto, desirous of obtaining higher reputation in that calling than he had acquired in painting, made himself eminently conspicuous in a smart skirmish that one day took place there; and valorously fighting in that affray, he was left dead, as by name he had ever been, in the forty-fifth year of his age. But in his fame this master will never be dead.



## PARMIGIANO.

[BORN 1504—DIED 1540.]

AMONG the many natives of Lombardy who have been endowed with the graceful gift of power in design, with a certain animation and spirit as regards invention, and with an especial ability in the delineation of beautiful landscapes, we may place before all the rest, the Parmigiano, Francesco Mazzuoli, who was indeed most liberally furnished by Heaven with all those qualities which are required to the production of an excellent painter. For, to say nothing of such advantages as I have already ascribed to many other artists, Francesco had the property of imparting to his figures a certain beauty and sweetness, with a singular grace of attitude, which was entirely peculiar to himself. Would to God only that Francesco had confined himself to the pursuit of painting, and had not lost his time in running after such whimsies as the congelation of mercury, in the hope of rendering himself richer than he had already been made by the gifts of Nature and Heaven ; for, in that case, he would have been without an equal, and must have stood alone in the art of painting.

Francesco was born in Parma in the year 1504, and being only a child of a few years old when his father died,<sup>1</sup> he was left to the guardianship of two uncles, brothers of his father, and both painters ; but these his kinsmen brought him up with the utmost care and affection, instilling into his mind all those

<sup>1</sup> His father was Filippo Mazzola, a painter of no great repute, called *Filippo dell' erbette*, because he succeeded best in depicting flowers and vegetables.

good principles, and forming him to those praiseworthy habits which are required to make an upright man and good Christian. No sooner had Francesco attained to some little height than he began to manifest his inclination to art, and before he had well taken the pen in hand to learn to write, he began to produce works in design. Impelled as he was by the force of Nature, which had destined him at his birth to be a painter, he began to do things which awakened surprise in all who beheld them. The master who taught him to write, perceiving this, and persuaded that the genius of the child must in time produce great results, advised his uncles to devote him to the study of design and painting.

Now, these relatives were already become old men, and were besides painters of no great fame; but possessing good judgment in matters of art, and seeing that God and Nature had been the first teachers of the boy, they did not fail to promote his studies, and, with the utmost solicitude, at once selected for him the best masters, under whose discipline they caused him to exercise his art, to the end that he might acquire a good manner. His continued progress sufficed to prove that he was born, so to speak, with the pencil in his hand. But while his uncles encouraged and incited him on the one hand, they were nevertheless compelled sometimes to interrupt his studies and restrain him on the other, fearing lest he should injure his health by too close an application to the art. At length, and when he had attained his sixteenth year, Pope Leo X. sent the Signor Prospero Colonna with an army to Parma, when the uncles of Francesco, fearing lest he might be induced to waste his time, or be led away from the study of his art, sent him forth in company with his cousin, Girolamo Mazzuoli, a boy like himself, and also a painter, despatching them both to Viandana, a place in the territories of the Duke of Mantua, where they remained during all the time that the war continued.

At the termination of the war, Francesco returned with his cousin to Parma, where he first completed certain pictures which he had left unfinished at his departure, and which are now in the possession of different citizens; and all these paint-

ings were finished before our artist had attained the age of nineteen.

Francesco afterwards conceived a desire to visit Rome, impelled thereto by his wish to make progress and by all that he had heard respecting the works of the good masters there, more particularly those of Raffaello and Michelagnolo. He therefore made known this desire of his heart to his uncles, who, considering the request which he presented to them to be nothing less than praiseworthy, declared themselves content to grant their permission, but observed that he would do well to take with him some performance as a specimen of what he could do, and by way of obtaining for himself an introduction to the nobles of the city and the artists of his own vocation. This advice was not displeasing to Francesco, who painted three pictures accordingly, two small and one tolerably large, in the last of which he depicted Our Lady with the Divine Child in her arms; the latter is taking fruit from the lap of an angel; there is also the figure of an old man with his arms covered with hair, which is painted with infinite judgment and knowledge of art; the colouring of this figure also is exceedingly pleasing.

But furthermore, to investigate the subtleties of art, Francesco one day set himself to take his own portrait, looking at himself for that purpose in a convex mirror, such as is used by barbers. While doing this he remarked the curious effect produced by the rotundity of the glass, which causes the beams of the ceiling to look bent, while the doors and all other parts of buildings are in like fashion distorted, and recede in a very peculiar manner. All this Francesco took it into his head to imitate for his diversion. He accordingly caused a globe or ball of wood to be made by a turner, and having divided it in half and brought it to the size of the mirror, he set himself with great art to copy all that he saw in the glass, more particularly his own likeness, which is of inestimable excellence, and so natural that one can scarcely believe it feigned. But as all the nearer objects thus depicted in the glass were increased, while those at greater distance were diminished, he painted a hand, which

he represented as employed in drawing, making it look a little larger than the true size, as it does in the glass, and so beautifully done that it appears to be the living member itself.

Francesco was a singularly handsome youth, his countenance and aspect were exceedingly graceful, and such as might seem an angel rather than a man; his portrait in that glass was therefore like something divine, and the whole work succeeded so admirably well that the true objects were not in any respect different to those therein depicted; the lustre of the glass, and every reflection thereon, with all the lights and shadows, were so true and real, that better could not be expected from the genius of man.

These works being completed, were considered extraordinary, not only by the old kinsmen of the artist, but by many others, well versed in art, they were held to be astonishingly fine; they were then packed up, and Francesco, accompanied by one of his uncles, repaired to Rome. Here the paintings were seen by the Papal Datary, who, perceiving them at once to be what they really were, immediately introduced the youth and his uncle to Pope Clement; the Pontiff therefore beholding these pictures, and seeing their author to be so young, remained utterly astonished, as did all the court, and no long time after, his Holiness, who had instantly conferred numerous favours on our artist, declared that he would confide to his care the paintings in the Hall of the Popes.

I have to remark that while studying in Rome he was careful to examine all the works, ancient and modern, to be found in that city, but more particularly did he hold those of Michelagnolo Buonarroti and Raffaello da Urbino in the highest veneration. The spirit of the last-named master had indeed, as was afterwards said, passed into the body of Francesco, and this opinion was entertained because, though still so young, the latter was seen to be highly distinguished in art, as well as graceful and amiable in manners and deportment, exactly as Raffaello had been.

But the master was not suffered to bring this work to perfection, the sack and ruin of Rome in 1527 interrupting his



labours, and not only did this event cause the arts to be for a time banished from that city, but it also cost the life of many artists. Francesco was indeed himself within a hair's-breadth of being among the number, which happened on this wise. In the commencement of the plunder, and when the soldiers began to burst into the houses, our artist was so intent on his work, that when his own dwelling was filled with certain of these men, who were Germans, he remained undisturbed by their clamours, and did not move from his place; arriving in the room therefore, and finding him thus employed, they stood confounded at the beauty of the paintings they beheld, and, like good and sensible men, as they must have been, they permitted him to continue his occupation. Thus, while the most impious cruelty of the barbarous hordes by whom the unhappy town was invested, was scourging that miserable place, and destroying all, sacred and secular works alike, having respect neither to God nor man, Francesco was provided for by those Germans, who honoured him greatly and defended him from every kind of injury. One loss only did our artist suffer at that time from these events—namely, that one of the soldiers in question, being a great lover of painting and the arts, compelled him to execute a large number of drawings in water-colour and with the pen, which were demanded as the payment of his ransom.

But when the soldiery was afterwards changed, Francesco stood again on the brink of destruction, for having one day gone out to seek certain of his friends, he was made prisoner by the new comers, and was compelled to purchase his release with the few crowns that he possessed. His uncle, grieved at what had happened, and perceiving that by these disorders the hope which Francesco had conceived of acquiring knowledge, honour, and wealth, was destroyed, resolved to take him back to Parma, and the rather as he saw that Rome was little less than ruined, while the Pope himself was a prisoner to the Spaniards. He despatched Francesco forward on the way to his native land. Arrived in Bologna, Francesco found his time pass very agreeably among his friends in that

city, more especially that portion of it which he passed in the house of a saddler of Parma, who was one of his most intimate associates ; and his sojourn there pleasing him greatly, he remained in Bologna some months.

One morning about this time, Francesco was still in bed, when the above-mentioned Antonio of Trent, who was with him, as I have said, for the purpose of executing engravings, having opened a certain chest belonging to Francesco, ruthlessly robbed him of all the copper-plates, prints, engravings on wood, and drawings that he possessed, wherewith this Antonio then departed ; and he must have taken himself fairly to the devil, seeing that no news was ever heard of him from that time forward. Happily Francesco did recover the plates ; for these Antonio had left with a friend of his own in Bologna, proposing to reclaim them perhaps at some more convenient time ; but of the drawings he could never more obtain sight or intelligence. Almost in despair, he returned to his painting, and to obtain a little money, portrayed the likeness of I know not what Count, then living at Bologna. He afterwards painted a picture of the Virgin with the Infant Christ, who holds the globe of the earth in his hands ; the Madonna in this work has a beautiful expression, and the Infant also is exceedingly natural. It was indeed one of this master's peculiarities, that he always gave much animation to the faces of his children, not unfrequently depicting them with an expression which, though truly child-like, yet gives evidence of that acuteness and quickness of perception so frequently observable in children. Our Lady is clothed in a manner that is somewhat peculiar, her dress consisting of a vestment of yellowish gauze or crape, having sleeves which are striped, as it were, with gold ; all which has of a truth a very beautiful effect, the form being perceptible through the draperies, which suffer the flesh to be seen in a most natural and delicate manner ; the hair also is so finely done that nothing painted could possibly be better.

Having then remained several years absent from his native place, and acquired much experience in art, but no increase of riches, although he had made many friends, Francesco at length

returned to Parma, in compliance with the entreaties of many among his relations and acquaintance in that city. He had no sooner arrived there than he received a commission for the painting in fresco of a large vaulting in the church of Santo Maria della Steccata.

Our artist in time, however, began to neglect the frescoes of the Steccata, or at least to proceed in so dilatory a fashion, that all perceived him to have no good will to the work; and this was occasioned by the fact that he had already commenced the study of matters connected with alchemy, which caused him altogether to neglect his painting, since he believed that he should make himself rich much more rapidly by the congelation of mercury, than by his art. No longer did he now employ his hours with those exquisite inventions which he had formerly realised with his pencils and colours, but wasted all his days in the burning of coals and wood, the handling of bottles and other trumpery, varied by the distillation of his own brains in absurdities, over which he would spend much more money in a day than he could make good in a week by his labours at the Steccata. Having no other means of life meanwhile, and being yet compelled to live, he gradually found himself getting through the little that he had, and consuming everything in his furnaces. Nay, what was worse, the members of the Brotherhood of the Steccata, perceiving that he had altogether neglected and laid aside the work he had engaged to accomplish for them, and having, peradventure, as is often done, paid him beforehand, brought a law-suit against him, from the consequences of which he thought it advisable to withdraw himself.

One night, therefore, Francesco, accompanied by certain of his friends, took flight to Casal Maggiore, where he contrived to get his alchemy out of his head for a time, and painted a picture for the church of San Stefano. He afterwards completed a picture (and this was the last painting executed by Francesco) representing the Roman Lucretia, a work of the most divine beauty, and one of the best that ever proceeded from his hand. but, however the thing has chanced I know not,

this picture has been lost, nor is it possible to ascertain what has become of it.

But Francesco, still having his thoughts filled with that alchemy, as happens to all those who have once given themselves to running after its phantoms; and having changed from the delicate, amiable, and elegant person that he was, to a bearded, long-haired, neglected, and almost savage or wild man, become at length strange and melancholy, thus constantly falling from bad to worse. In this condition he was attacked by a malignant fever, which caused him in a very few days to pass to a better life; and so it was that Francesco found an end to the troubles of this world, which had never been known to him but as a place full of cares and pains. It had been his wish to receive burial in that Church of the Servite Monks which is called the Fontana, and is situate at about a mile from Casal Maggiore; he was there interred accordingly, naked as had also been his own desire, and with a cross of cypress placed upright on his breast in the grave. It was on August 24th, in the year 1540, that this master finished the course of his life, which he did greatly to the loss of our Art, seeing that his hand imparted a singular grace and beauty to all the paintings produced by him.

Francesco took great pleasure in playing on the lute, and had so much genius, with so delicate a taste for the same, that he was no less excellent in this art than in that of painting. But as respects the last, it is most certain that if he had not been capricious in his labours, and could have prevailed on himself to lay aside the follies of the alchemists, he would have been one of the most distinguished and most admirable painters of our time. I will not deny that it may be sometimes good to work only when the inspiration seizes, and when the artist feels most inclined to do so; but what I do censure is, the working very little, or perhaps not at all, and the waste of time in useless cogitations.



## FRA SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO.

[BORN 1485—DIED 1547.]

THE first profession of Sebastiano, as many affirm, was not painting, but music; for, besides that he was a singer, he delighted to perform on various instruments, but more especially on the lute, that being an instrument which permits the player to take all the parts himself, without requiring any one to accompany him. His accomplishments in this matter rendered him for a time exceedingly acceptable to the nobles of Venice, with whom, as a man of ability, he ever lived in confidential intercourse. The wish to devote himself to painting having been conceived by Sebastiano while he was still young, he acquired the first principles of his art from Giovan-Bellini, then an old man; but when Giorgione da Castel Franco brought into Venice the newer manner, with its superior harmony and increased vividness of colouring, Sebastiano left Bellini to place himself with Giorgione.

By his work the reputation of the artist was much extended, and Agostino Chigi, a very rich merchant of Siena, who had frequent communications with Venice, hearing him much extolled in Rome, made efforts to attract him thither, the abilities of Sebastiano in playing on the lute being equally pleasing to Agostino with his acquirements as a painter; and the latter was furthermore incited by the agreeable conversation of Sebastiano, which was also much commended. No great labour was required to lead Sebastiano to Rome; nay, knowing how helpful and favourable that city, as the common country of all distinguished men, had ever proved herself towards such, he went thither more than willingly.

While Sebastiano was thus producing pictures in Rome,

Raffaello da Urbino had risen into great credit as a painter, and his friends and adherents maintained that his works were more strictly in accordance with the rules of art than those of Michelagnolo, affirming that they were graceful in colouring, of beautiful invention, admirable in expression, and of characteristic design; while those of Michelagnolo, it was averred, had none of these qualities with the exception of the design. For these reasons, Raphael was judged by those who thus opined to be fully equal, if not superior, to Michelagnolo in painting generally, and was considered by the same to be decidedly superior to him as regarded colouring in particular. These ideas, promulgated by many artists, were very widely diffused, and found favour among those who preferred the grace of Raphael to the profundity of Michelagnolo, and who showed themselves on many occasions to be more favourable to Raphael in their judgment than to Buonarroti.

But not so Sebastiano, he was not among the followers of these extreme opinions; possessing an exquisite judgment, he fully and exactly appreciated the value of both these masters; the mind of Buonarroti was thereby disposed towards him, and being greatly pleased with the grace and beauty of his colouring, he took him into his protection, thinking also that by assisting Sebastiano in design, he might succeed without doing anything himself, in confounding those who held the above-described opinions, while he, under the shadow of a third person, might appear as judge between the two, Raphael or Sebastiano, deciding which of them was the best.

No long time afterwards, and when, Raphael having died, the first place in painting was universally accorded to Sebastiano, in consequence of the favour which the latter received from Michelagnolo, Giulio Romano, Giovan Francesco of Florence, Perino del Vaga, Polidoro Maturino, Baldassare of Siena, and the rest were compelled to give way; wherefore Agostino Chigi, who had caused his chapel and tomb in Santa Maria del Popolo to be constructed under the direction of Raphael, agreed with Sebastiano that the latter should execute the whole of the painting, and he having

erected his enclosure accordingly, the chapel remained thus concealed without ever being seen by any one, until the year 1554, at which time Luigi, the son of Agostino, resolved that although his father had not been permitted to see that work finished, yet he would himself behold the completion thereof. He, therefore, commissioned Francesco Salviati to paint the altar-piece and the chapel, when the last-mentioned artist brought the work in a short time to that perfection which would never have been given to it by the tardiness and irresolution of Sebastiano, who, so far as can be ascertained, had done but little thereto, although he had received from the liberality of Agostino and his heirs a much larger sum than would have been due to him even had he completed the whole. But this was what Sebastiano did not do, whether because he had become weary of the labours of art, or because he was too busily occupied with the interests and pleasures of the world. In the same manner he treated Messer Filippo of Siena, Clerk of the Chamber, for whom he commenced a story in oil on the wall, above the high altar of the church of Santa Maria della Pace in Rome, and never finished it at all, insomuch that the monks, when they had fallen quite into despair respecting it, were compelled to remove the scaffolding, which they found to encumber their church and impede the services, having no further resource but that of taking patience, and permitting the part to remain covered with a cloth, as it continued to be during all the remainder of Sebastiano's life; but when he was dead, and the monks uncovered the picture so that what he had done could be seen, the portion that had been accomplished was acknowledged to be an exceedingly beautiful work. There are many female heads, for example, in that painting (which shows Our Lady visiting Sant' Elizabetta) that are singularly pleasing and display the most attractive grace, but here also there is evidence that this man performed all that he did with infinite difficulty and most laborious painstaking, and that no part of his work was effected with that facility with which Nature and study will sometimes reward those who delight in their vocation and are perpetually occupied therewith.



A proof of what is here affirmed may be found in this same church of the Pace, and in the chapel of Agostino Chigi, where Raphael had painted the Sibyls and the Prophets ; for Sebastiano, in the hope of surpassing Raphael, undertook to paint something of his own in the niches beneath these sibyls and prophets, proposing to execute his work on the stone, and covering it to that end with peperigno, the interstices being filled in with stucco under the action of fire, but he spent so much time in consideration of the matter that he left the work after all in a state of preparation only, seeing that when it had been ten years in that condition Sebastiano died.

It is true that there was no difficulty in obtaining some portrait taken from the life from Sebastiano: this he did with tolerable ease and promptitude, but with anything appertaining to stories or other figures, it was altogether the reverse. To tell the truth, portrait-painting was the proper vocation of Sebastiano. Sebastiano did certainly surpass all others in the painting of portraits; in that branch of art no one has ever equalled the delicacy and excellence of his work.

Now it happened about this time, that Mariano Fetti Frate del Piombo<sup>1</sup> died, and Sebastiano, remembering certain promises made to him by the bishop of Vasona, master of the household to his Holiness, made interest to obtain the office of the seal, thus vacated. Thereupon Sebastiano assumed the habit of a monk; when it soon appeared as if he felt his very soul changed thereby, for perceiving that he had now the means of satisfying his desires without stroke of pencil, he gave himself up to his repose, and indemnified himself, by the enjoyments which his income supplied, for all the painful nights and laborious days which he had previously spent: or if on any occasion he felt obliged to execute a painting, he went to his work with such manifest reluctance that he might have been supposed to be rather going to his death.

This man had so much pleasure in gossiping that he would waste whole days therein, or if at length he proceeded to his

<sup>1</sup> Piombo, *lead*, referring to the leaden cachet attached to official papal documents.



work, it was easy to perceive that he was subjecting himself to infinite suffering, and this may perhaps have been one cause of an opinion which he held, which was that his works could not be adequately paid for, whatever the price he received for them.

Fra Sebastiano had a tolerably good house which he had built for himself near the Porta del Popolo at Rome, and there he lived in the utmost content, without troubling himself further about painting or working in any way. "It is a great fatigue," he would often remark, "to expose one's self in age to the necessity of restraining those ardours which artists are induced to excite in themselves by the desire for honour, by emulation, and by the love of gain, although this might be endured in youth;" and he would add that it was quite as prudent to seek the quiet of life as to consume one's days in labour and discomfort, in the hope of leaving a name after one's death, seeing that the labours thus endured, with the works which were the result of them, would alike come to an end at some time, sooner or later, be they what they might. And as he would say these things, so also would he practise and put them in execution to the utmost of his power, seeking the best wines and the most inviting meats that could be found for his table, and ever thinking more of the enjoyments of life than of art.

A friend to all distinguished men, Fra Sebastiano frequently invited Molza and Messer Gandolfo to sup with him, when he would make them right good cheer. The Florentine, Messer Francesco Berni, was also his very intimate friend, and wrote a poem to him; whereunto Sebastiano replied by another, which was not without merit, for, being a man of varied acquirements, he knew, among other things, how to write Tuscan verse in a jesting humour. Being reproached by certain persons, who declared it to be a shameful thing that he would no longer work, because he had sufficient to live on, Fra Sebastiano replied in this manner: "Nay, since I have enough to support me, I will not work; there are geniuses now in the world who do more in two months than I used to do in two years; I think, indeed, that if I live much longer I shall find that everything has been painted which it is possible to paint, and since these good people

are doing so much, it is upon the whole well that there is one who is content to do nothing, to the end that they may have all the more to do." With these and other pleasantries, Fra Sebastiano was ever ready to reply, always facetious and amusing as he was; a better or more agreeable companion than himself, of a truth, there never lived. Sebastiano, as I have said, was much beloved by Michelagnolo, but it is also true that when that part of the chapel whereon is executed the Last Judgment of Buonarroti had to be painted, there did arise some anger between them; Sebastiano having persuaded the Pope to make Michelagnolo execute the work in oil, while the latter would do it in no other manner than fresco. But Michelagnolo saying neither yes nor no, the wall was prepared after the fashion of Fra Sebastiano, and Buonarroti suffered it to remain thus for several months, without doing anything to the work. At length, and when pressed on the subject, he declared that he would only do it in fresco, "oil-painting being an art only fit for women, or idle and leisurely people like Fra Sebastiano." The preparations made by Sebastiano were therefore removed, and everything being made ready for the painting in fresco, Michelagnolo then set hard to the work, but he never forgot the affront which it appeared to him that he had received from Fra Sebastiano, and maintained a feeling of hatred against him almost to the Frate's death.

Being finally brought to a state wherein he would neither work nor do any other thing but just attend to his office as Frate del Piombo, and give himself good cheer, Fra Sebastiano fell sick of a most violent fever, and being of very full habit, the disease attained to such a height that in a very few days he resigned his soul to God. Having made a will, he commanded that his remains should be carried to the tomb without any ceremony of priests or friars, nor would he have any expenses incurred for lights, but ordered that the amount which would have been thus expended should be distributed to the poor, for the love of God; and so was it done. Fra Sebastiano was buried in the Church of the Popolo, in the month of June of the year 1547.

## CRISTOFANO GHERARDI, CALLED DOCENO.

[BORN 1508—DIED 1556.]

WHILE Raffaello dal Colle was labouring in his native Borgo, and acquiring riches as well as fame, there was in the same place a youth, then but sixteen years old, called Cristofano, and for his surname Doceno, the son of Guido Gherardi, a man of an honourable family resident in that town, and who, devoting himself by a natural inclination and with much profit to painting, drew and coloured so well and with so much grace, that it was a marvel.

Wherefore the above-mentioned Raphael dal Colle, having seen certain animals, as dogs, wolves, hares, and various kinds of birds and fish, from the hand of this youth, all very well done; finding, moreover, that he was of most pleasing conversation, was well content to make his acquaintance. Cristofano was also exceedingly facetious and acute, a most good-natured little man, while at the same time he lived much apart, withdrawn amidst his own thoughts, and leading as it were the life of a philosopher, insomuch that Raffaello dal Colle was very glad to have him, studying and learning his art in his workshops. Passing his days in designing under the discipline of Raffaello, therefore, Cristofano had for some time been thus employed, when there came to Borgo-a-San Sepolcro the painter Rosso, with whom Doceno likewise formed a friendship, and obtained some designs from his hand, which he studied and worked on with much diligence; these works appearing to him (who had never seen any but from the hand of Raffaello) to be, as in truth they were, most beautiful.

Meanwhile Giorgio Vasari returned from Rome, and was sojourning in Florence with the Duke Alessandro, until the Cardinal Ippolito, his lord, should arrive from Hungary; when he was to commence the decoration in fresco of certain apartments in the Medici palace, the subjects chosen being events from the life of Cæsar: Giovanni da Udine having adorned the ceilings of that building with stucco work and paintings. Now Vasari, who had his abode appointed him in the convent of the Servites, had become known to Cristofano at Borgo, at the time when he (Giorgio) had gone thither to visit Il Rosso, and had taken much notice of the youth, who, on his part, had treated Giorgio very kindly. Cristofano therefore now resolved to fix himself with Vasari, and to avail himself of that opportunity for studying the art much more zealously than he had ever done before. After having been a year with Giorgio, therefore, the latter, observing him very closely, clearly perceived in him the materials for making an able artist, and finding him moreover to be of most gentle disposition, pleasing in conversation, and in all things greatly to his liking, he conceived a very strong affection for the youth.

At Florence his Excellency, the Duke, perceiving the unwearied diligence of Cristofano and his extraordinary zeal for the work, took a great liking to him; scarcely had the first grey light of dawn appeared, before Cristofano was at his labour, in which he took such extreme delight, and so entirely did he devote all his thought and care thereto, that he would sometimes set off without waiting to finish dressing himself. And it would not only occasionally but even frequently happen that in his haste he would put on a pair of shoes (he keeping all that he possessed under his bed) that were not fellows; his cloak too was for the most part put on the wrong side out, so that the cape was turned in. One morning among others that he was going to his work thus accoutred, it chanced that the Signor Duke with the Signora Duchess were about to set forth for the chase, and standing to look at the paintings, while the ladies and others were getting themselves into order, they perceived Cristofano with his mantle as usual wrong side out, and the cape or hood



turned in, whereupon both laughing, the Duke said, "Cristofano, how does it chance that your cloak is so often wrong side out?" to which Cristofano replied, "I don't know how it happens, Signor, but I must needs see to getting myself a kind of cloak that shall be alike on both sides, and have neither right nor wrong, for I have not patience to endure this sort of cloak, seeing that when I dress myself and leave the house in the morning it is for the most part dark, besides that one of my eyes has been so much weakened that I can see nothing at all with it. But let your Excellency look at what I am painting, and not at what I am wearing."

The Signor Duke made no further remark, but in a few days he caused a mantle of the very finest cloth to be made, with the parts put together in such a manner that the inside was not to be distinguished from the outside; the collar was trimmed with an edge which was exactly the same within as without, and in like manner was arranged the bordering of the cloak. This he sent by one of his attendants to Cristofano, commanding the man to present it to that artist on the part of the Duke. The latter having, therefore, received the mantle early one morning, tried it at once, without making further ceremony, and finding that it was exactly what he wanted, he said to the messenger, "The Duke is a sensible man; tell him that this cloak suits me perfectly."

Cristofano being thus careless of his person, and hating nothing so much as new clothes, or the feeling himself too much straitened and confined in what he wore, it was the custom of Vasari, who knew this peculiarity, to observe when he required any kind of new garment, and he would then get the requisite article made for him in secret; taking it some morning early into his room, and carrying off the old dress he would leave the new, Cristofano being thus compelled to put on what he found. But it was a marvellous piece of sport to hear him while he was angrily clothing himself with these new vestments: "Look at this," he would cry, "what a murder is here, why can't a man live at his ease in this world? and why the devil should these enemies of all comfort give themselves so much trouble to invent these torments?"

Entering his room one day, Vasari thus found him fast asleep with one leg clothed and the other unclothed, whereupon he made one servant hold him by the shoulders while another drew off the hose, Cristofano all the while abusing the clothes, and all who contrived such things, as well as Giorgio himself, declaring that those fashions kept men imprisoned as if in chains; nay, he threatened to get away by God's blessing from them all and go back to San Justino, where they permitted him to live as he pleased, and where he was not subjected to those intolerable restraints; it was indeed not without great difficulty that he could be pacified.

Cristofano was a man who loved to speak but little, and liked that others also should be brief in discourse, he would even have had all the names of people be very short, greatly approving that of a slave belonging to Messer Sforza, and who was called M. "Yes," said Cristofano, "such as those are good names, but your Giovan-Francesco and Giovan-Antonio! why one has to work for an hour before they can be brought out." He was of a most amiable disposition, and saying these things, as he did, in his Borghesian dialect, it was enough to make Weeping itself laugh to hear him.

It was a favourite amusement with Cristofano to go on festival days to the places where legends and printed pictures are sold, and there he would remain the live-long day: he would generally buy some, but while he looked at the others he would for the most part lay down these purchases and leave them behind him. He would never mount a horse unless compelled to do so, although descended from a family of noble rank in his country, and possessing a fair amount of wealth. When his brother Borgognone died, Cristofano had to go to Borgo, and Vasari, who had received a large amount of his stipend and had taken care of it for him, remarked to him, "Here, I have all this money of yours, you had better take it with you for your various requirements." "I want no money," replied Cristofano, "take it for yourself; it is enough for me to have the luck of being with you, and to have had leave to live and die by your side."

## JACOPO DA PONTORMO.

[BORN 1494—DIED 1557.]

BARTOLOMMEO, the father of Jacopo, was a Florentine, and as I have been told, of the family of the Carucci, is reported to have been a disciple of Domenico Ghirlandajo, and being a painter of tolerably good repute in those times, he is affirmed to have executed numerous works in the Val d'Arno.

Having been summoned to Empoli therefore, on a certain occasion, and being there employed in the execution of different works, he took up his abode for some time in that place and its neighbourhood, eventually choosing a wife from Pontormo, Alessandra namely, a virtuous and well-born maiden, the daughter of Pasquale di Zanobi and of Mona Brigida his wife.

To this Bartolommeo, then, there was born in the year 1493, a son, whom he called Jacopo, but the father dying in 1499, the mother in 1504, and the grandfather in 1506, the child was left to the care of Mona Brigida, his grandmother. With her he resided accordingly for some years at Pontormo, where she caused him to be taught reading, writing, and the first principles of the Latin grammar; but at the age of thirteen, his grandmother took him to Florence, where she placed him under the care of the Court of Minors, to the end that his small property might be managed and preserved by that magistracy, as is the custom. The boy himself Mona Brigida placed in the house of a certain Battisto, a cordwainer, who was some sort of distant connection of his family, and having done that she returned to Pontormo, taking with her a sister of Jacopo's.

But no long time had elapsed before Mona Brigida herself also died, when Jacopo was compelled to take his sister to him-

self, and accordingly found an abode for her in the house of one of his relations called Niccolaio, who dwelt at Florence in the Via de' Servi. But even this maiden did not survive to become a wife, she died like the rest of her family, and this happened in the year 1512.

Returning to the personal affairs of Jacopo himself, however, I have to relate, that he had not been many months in Florence when he was placed by Bernardo Vettori with Leonardo da Vinci, and a short time afterwards with Mariotto Albertinelli, next with Piero di Cosimo, and finally with Andrea del Sarto, to whom he went in the year 1512. But neither did he stay very long with Andrea; and it would appear that after Jacopo had prepared the cartoons for the arch of the Servites, of which there will be further mention hereafter, he was never regarded with favourable eyes by Andrea del Sarto, whatever the cause may have been.

Now it chanced that in those days Raffaello da Urbino came to Florence, when he saw this work and the youth who had accomplished it, with infinite amazement, prophesying that Jacopo would ultimately become what he was in fact seen to be. No long time afterwards, Mariotto having left Florence and gone to Viterbo, there to execute the painting which had been commenced by Fra Bartolommeo, Jacopo, still but a youth, was left without a master. Alone and melancholy, he then went of his own accord to fix himself with Andrea del Sarto; this happened just at the time when the latter had completed those stories from the life of San Filippo which he painted in the court of the Servites, and these works pleased Jacopo, as indeed did all the productions of Andrea, as well as the manner and design of that master.

Shortly afterwards, the Servite monks commissioned the painter Andrea di Cosimo to enrich their escutcheon with gilding, and furthermore commanded him to surround the same with decorations of grottesche, of which he was an excellent master, and with the devices of the house of Medici; there were besides to be figures on each side, that of Faith on the one hand namely, and that of Charity on the other.



But Andrea di Cosimo, well perceiving that he should not be able to execute all these things with his own hand, determined to have the figures done by some other artist, and having summoned Jacopo, who was then not more than nineteen years old, he commissioned him to paint those two figures. He had, however, no small difficulty in prevailing on Jacopo to undertake them. Conscious of his youth, the latter was unwilling to subject himself to such a trial, and to begin by a work which was to be exhibited in a place of so much importance; but taking courage at length, although not so well practised in fresco as in oil-painting, Jacopo finally accepted the charge of those figures, and withdrew to prepare the cartoons (he being still with Andrea del Sarto) at Sant' Antonio, near the Gate of Faenza, where he had his abode.

In a short time he brought them to completion, and having done that, he one day took his master, Andrea del Sarto, to see them; the master examined them, accordingly, to his great admiration, and even astonishment. He praised them also in the highest terms, but afterwards, as it is said, whether moved by envy, or from some other cause, he never again could look on Jacopo with a favourable eye, as I have before related; nay, when the youth went afterwards to his workshops, either he found them closed against him, or was so insolently jeered by Andrea's boys, that he withdrew himself altogether, beginning to live in the most frugal manner, seeing that he was very poor, and to study with the utmost assiduity.

When Andrea di Cosimo had completed the gilding of the escutcheon and had decorated the whole arch, Jacopo set himself, without any assistance, to execute the remainder of the work, when, inspired by the wish to distinguish himself, and by his desire for occupation, being also well aided by Nature, which had endowed him with infinite grace, and an extraordinary fertility of genius, he brought the whole to completion with remarkable promptitude, and to such perfection, that an old and experienced master, though one of great excellence, could hardly have done it better.

Taking courage from this successful experiment, and thinking

he could produce a still better picture, Jacopo formed the resolution, but without saying a word to any one, of destroying all that he had done, and recommencing the work anew, after another design which he had in his thoughts. But the monks, meanwhile, seeing that the work was finished, and that Jacopo came to it no more, repaired to Andrea di Cosimo and urged him so pressingly, that he determined to have the painting uncovered.

Going to seek Jacopo, therefore, with the purpose of inquiring whether there were anything more that he proposed to do to it, but not finding him, because, absorbed in his new design, he had shut himself up, and would not reply to or be seen by any one, Andrea caused the enclosure, with its roof, to be removed, and gave the painting to view. But that same evening Jacopo left his house with the intention of repairing to the Servites and throwing down all that he had done, so soon as it should be night, intending then to begin the new work, when he found the scaffolding removed, the painting discovered, and a large crowd of people engaged in the examination thereof.

Much displeased, Jacopo sought out Andrea, and complained of his having permitted the work to be given to view without first asking his consent, describing at the same time what he had intended to do. To this Andrea replied, laughing, "You have but little cause to complain, Jacopo, since what you have done is so good that it could not, I am firmly persuaded, have been made better had you changed it as you proposed. Keep your design, therefore, for some other occasion, since it is certain that you will not want commissions."

The work was indeed very beautiful, nay is, as may be seen: it was found to be new in manner moreover, and those two female heads exhibited so much softness and beauty, to say nothing of the loveliness distinguishing the graceful and exquisite children, that it was considered the most admirable work in fresco which had ever then been seen. Beside the children that are with the figure of Charity, there are two others floating in the air, and holding a drapery attached to the Papal Arms; these are so beautiful, that better could not be; but all the

figures have indeed very extraordinary relief; the colouring and every other particular are such, in short, that they could not be sufficiently commended.

Michelagnolo Buonarroti was one day examining this work, and considering that he who had accomplished it was but a youth of nineteen, he said, "This youth will be such, to judge from what we here see, that if he lives, and should go on as he has begun, he will carry this art to the very skies."

The fame and credit thus obtained having reached to the men of Pontormo, they sent for Jacopo and caused him to paint the arms of Pope Leo over that gate of the castle which looks upon the high road, with two boys which are very beautiful; but the work has unhappily been already much injured by the rain.

But whoever shall desire to see the best work ever performed in his whole life by Jacopo da Pontormo,<sup>1</sup> and who shall propose to himself to ascertain what the genius of that master was capable of effecting, whether as regards the power of invention displayed, the grouping of the figures, the animation of the heads, or the variety and beauty of the attitudes, let him examine one angle of those apartments of the before-mentioned Florentine noble, Borgherini; that on the left namely as you enter the door, where there is a story of which the figures are small, although the work itself is of fair size, and this is indeed of admirable excellence. Among the figures is one which is indeed singularly beautiful; this is the portrait of Jacopo's disciple Bronzino, then but a boy, and whom he has represented seated on a flight of steps at the lower part of the picture; the youth holds a basket in his hand.

In the year 1552 there was a slight attack of plague in Florence, when many persons left the city to avoid that most highly contagious disease, and to place their lives in security; our artist also found an opportunity for removing himself to a distance, and that happened on this wise. A certain Prior of the Certosa, which had been erected by the Acciaiuoli family at about three miles from Florence, was about to cause some

<sup>1</sup> It is now in the National Gallery, London.



pictures to be painted in the angles of a large and beautiful cloister surrounding a fine meadow, and these he placed in the hands of Pontormo; when sought for to undertake this work, therefore, Jacopo accepted the proposal most willingly, and departed at once for the Certosa, taking with him Il Bronzino and no one else.

The manner of life here presented to him, that tranquillity, that silence, that solitude—all things, at a word, were found by Jacopo to be entirely in accord with his character and genius; they were indeed so pleasing to him that he resolved to seize that occasion for making an effort in his art, and hoped to prove to the world that he had acquired a more varied manner and higher perfection than his works had ever before displayed. No long time previously there had been brought from Germany to Florence a large number of plates, very finely executed on wood and copper by the burin of Albert Dürer, a most excellent German painter, and very remarkable engraver, both on copper and wood.

At the entrance to the cloister in question, the master depicted Our Saviour Christ in the garden; the time is night, but the picture is so beautifully illuminated by the light of the moon, that it appears almost as the day. Our Lord is kneeling in prayer, and at no great distance from him are Peter, James, and John, lying asleep and executed in a manner so entirely similar to that of Dürer that it is a kind of marvel. Not far off is seen Judas Iscariot leading the Jews to the capture of his Master, and to this man as well as to those by whom he is accompanied, Pontormo has given a face of the strangest forms and most exaggerated expressions, all being entirely after the German type. It moves one to compassion indeed, as one remarks, on examining these works, the simplicity of the artist who would bestow so much labour and pains to acquire that which all others seek with so much care to avoid, or if they have it, to lose; and this is all the more extraordinary when it is considered, that Pontormo abandoned a manner which surpassed in excellence that of all others and gave infinite pleasure to every one merely to secure a defect. Did not Pontormo know that the Germans



and Flemings come into these parts for the very purpose of learning that Italian manner which he with so much labour and pains was seeking to abandon as if it were a bad one? <sup>1</sup>

Jacopo was somewhat slow in the execution of his pictures, and on this account, as also because the solitude of the Certosa was agreeable to him, he spent several years over the works which he executed in this place; nay, after the pestilence had ceased and he had returned to Florence, he frequented the convent continually, going constantly backward and forward from the Certosa to the city; proceeding in this manner he was enabled to do many things for those fathers, which was greatly to their satisfaction. Among other paintings, for example, he executed one in the church and over one of the doors which give entrance into the chapels; this was the half-length portrait of a Monk, who had attained the age of 120 years; he was a lay brother in the Monastery of the Certosa, and was then living there. In that portrait there is so much life and force, it is executed with so much animation, and finished so admirably well, that this work alone may suffice to form an excuse for all the eccentricity of Pontormo, and should secure him his pardon for the new and whimsical manner which he had taken it into his head to adopt, during his abode in that solitary place, and when far removed from the commerce of the world.

For the apartments of the Prior of the Certosa also, Pontormo painted a picture representing the Nativity of Christ; in this he has depicted Joseph giving light to the Divine Child in the obscurity of the night, by means of a lantern which he is holding; that too was done in pursuit of the same fancies and caprices which had been infused into his mind by those German prints.

About this time Jacopo obtained, but not without many labours, the fulfilment of a wish which he had long entertained; for, having ever desired to inhabit a house of his own, and not one merely hired, in order that he might make such arrangements as he thought proper, and live after his own fashion, he did ultimately succeed in buying one, which was situate in the

<sup>1</sup> Many Italian artists of the time, however, and especially Raphael, were enthusiastic admirers of Dürer.

Via della Colonna, nearly opposite to the dwelling of the Nuns of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

When the Siege of Florence was over, Pope Clement gave command to Messer Ottaviano de' Medici that he should cause the hall of Poggio-a-Cajano to be finished, whereupon, Francia Bigio and Andrea del Sarto being dead, the whole charge of the work was entrusted to Jacopo Pontormo, who having first ordered scaffolding and an enclosure to be erected, then began to prepare the cartoons, but suddenly falling into his whims and fantasies, he wasted his time in cogitations and proceeded no further in the work. This might not perhaps have been the result had Bronzino been in the country, but he was then absent, being employed at the Imperiale, a place belonging to the Duke of Urbino and situate near Pesaro.

The Duke, who desired to reward very liberally the ability which Pontormo had displayed in this picture, sent a message to him by his attendant, Niccolò da Montaguto, to the effect that he might ask whatever he pleased and should have his wish granted. But such was, I know not whether to say the timidity or the too great respect and modesty of this man, that he asked nothing better than just as much money as would enable him to redeem a cloak which he had hastily pledged. Hearing this, the Duke could not but laugh at the singular character of the artist, and commanded that he should receive fifty gold crowns, offering him at the same time a pension, but Niccolò had much trouble to make him accept it.

These sums of money enabling Pontormo to commence certain alterations which he desired to make in his house, he set hand to the work and began to build accordingly, but did not effect anything of much importance. It is true that many say he had the intention of spending very largely, according to his means, for that fabric, intending to construct a very commodious dwelling, for which, it is added, that he had made a design of some merit; but from all that one sees done, the place, whether from Jacopo's not having enough to spend thereon, or from some other cause, would rather appear to have been contrived by a whimsical and solitary being, than likely to

become a well-arranged habitation. To the room wherein Pontormo slept, for example, and in which he sometimes worked also, it was necessary to ascend by a ladder of wood, which by means of pulleys he then drew up, so that none could approach his chamber without his knowledge and permission.

But that which most displeased his contemporaries in this artist, was that he would never work but at such moments as he pleased and for such persons as chanced to be agreeable to him, insomuch that he was frequently sought by gentlemen who desired to possess some work from his hand, but for whom he would do nothing, an occurrence which on one occasion happened to the magnificent Ottaviano de' Medici, whom he refused to serve as was desired. Yet at that very time he would probably be employing himself zealously for some inferior and plebeian person, although receiving only the vilest price for his labour. To the mason Rossino, for example, a person of no small ingenuity in his way, and who knew how to profit by his simplicity, Pontormo gave a most exquisite picture of Our Lady as the payment for constructing certain chambers and other mason-work, which the builder had done for him.

But although the whimsical proceedings of Pontormo, his unsocial mode of life, and other eccentricities were but little liked, yet whoever shall be pleased to make his apology for the same may be well permitted to do so. For we certainly owe him thanks for such works as he did perform, and for those which it did not please him to undertake, we are not called on either to censure or reproach him. No artist is compelled to labour except at such times and for such persons as he pleases; and if his interests be affected by whatever refusals he shall make, that is his affair. As to the solitude in which Jacopo delighted, I have ever heard that solitude is most favourable to the progress of study, but even though it were not so, I see no great reason that there is for censuring him, who, without offending the laws of God or his neighbour, is disposed to live after his own manner; dwelling in such fashion and arranging his hours after such sort as shall best accord with his disposition and character.



Now his excellency the Duke, pursuing the footsteps of his predecessors, has ever sought to benefit and embellish his native city; wherefore, proceeding with that intent, he determined to cause the principal chapel of the magnificent church of San Lorenzo, built aforetime by the great Cosimo de' Medici the elder; he resolved, I say, to have that chapel adorned with paintings, and gave the charge of the work to Jacopo Pontormo. The artist was exceedingly rejoiced at receiving that favour, whether he owed it, as is said, to the intervention of Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, the Steward of the Household, or whether it was conferred by the Duke of his own accord. For although the magnitude of the work may have given him pause, or even perhaps alarmed him to a certain degree, he being then somewhat advanced in years, yet he perceived, on the other hand, how ample a field the importance of that undertaking would present to him, for giving evidence of the power and ability wherewith he was endowed, and was proportionately content with his appointment.

Having completely enclosed the chapel within walls, planks, and curtains, Jacopo then shut himself up from all the world, and kept the place so exclusively sealed against every one, that for the space of eleven years no one person, himself only excepted, no friend, no other living soul, in short, ever entered within the enclosure. It is very true that some young men who were drawing in the Sacristy of Michelagnolo, did climb on the roof, after the manner of such youngsters, and having removed the screws and bolt from one of the great gilded rosettes of the ceiling, they thus contrived to see all that was therein. When Jacopo discovered this, he was much displeased, but took no further notice of the matter than was implied by his closing up every opening more diligently than ever, although there are not wanting those who have reported that he persecuted those young men relentlessly, and sought to do them all the mischief that he could. Imagining that in this work he was about to surpass all other painters, nay, very possibly, as is said, Michelagnolo himself, Pontormo depicted numerous stories in the upper part, the subjects of all being scenes from the



Life of Adam and Eve. These were succeeded in the lower part by one which is not less than fifteen braccia in each direction, and the subject of this was the Deluge, amidst the waters of which are seen weltering vast numbers of drowned and dead bodies,<sup>1</sup> with Noah himself, engaged in communication with the Almighty Father.

I cannot say that I have myself ever been able fully to comprehend all the meaning of this story, although I know that Jacopo was a sufficiently ingenious person himself, and was besides in close intercourse with many sage and learned men; I do not understand, that is to say, what he meant to signify in that part where he has exhibited Our Saviour Christ on high, recalling the dead to life, while beneath his feet is the figure of God the Father engaged in the creation of Adam and Eve.

In this undertaking, wherein Pontormo had hoped to surpass all that had been effected by art, he did not attain to a comparison even with his own works performed at an earlier period, whence it may be clearly seen, that he who ventures to do himself violence and seeks to force nature, does but ensure the ruin of those good qualities which had been imparted to him, and with which this artist had without doubt been largely endowed.

As our artist died a short time before the work had reached its completion, some assert that his death was caused by grief, seeing that he did himself become eventually very much dissatisfied with his performance on that occasion; but the truth is, that being old and having previously exhausted himself with heavy labour in the taking of portraits, making models of clay, and working in fresco, he fell into dropsy, and this disease it was by which his life was ultimately destroyed, an event that happened when he had attained his sixty-fifth year.

<sup>1</sup> It is related of Jacopo da Pontormo, that when painting the Deluge he kept dead bodies in troughs of water, to give them the proper degree of inflation for the time when he should desire to paint them, to the end that he might depict them in the swollen state proper to the drowned.—ED. FLOR., 1832-38.

Jacopo da Pontormo was a man of frugal habits and regular life; in his clothing and mode of existence he was rather sparing and poor than liberal or nice, and almost always lived alone, not choosing to have any one who should serve or even cook for him. In his last years, however, he did receive into his house a young man of good understanding and character, Battista Naldini namely; and this person took as much care for the comfort of Jacopo, as the latter would permit him to take; and, at the same time, made no small progress under his discipline; nay, rather, he profited to such an extent by Jacopo's instructions, that the best results are hoped for from him.

But above all others, he was always most especially attached to Bronzino, who returned his affection with equal love, grateful as he was for the advantages, and fully conscious of the benefits, which Pontormo had conferred on him.<sup>1</sup>

Jacopo Pontormo was a man of the most kindly dispositions, and had exceedingly agreeable manners, although marked by some peculiarities; he was so grievously afraid of death, that he would not even hear the subject mentioned, and took great pains to avoid meeting a dead body: he would never go to festivals, or frequent any place where large masses of people assembled, abhorring the discomfort of being pressed in a crowd; he was indeed incredibly solitary in his habits of life. Sometimes, when about to commence his work, he would set himself to think so profoundly on what he was about to do, that at the end of the day he had to depart without having done any one thing beside thinking, through the whole course of those hours. And that this occurred to him very many times in the progress of that work of San Lorenzo, just described, may be easily believed, because when he had once determined on what he chose to do, being a most able and skilful painter, he made no loitering, but readily executed what he desired, and could at once accomplish whatever he had determined to perform.

<sup>1</sup> Bronzino introduced the portrait of his master into his large picture of the "Descent of our Saviour into the *Limbo*, or jaws of Hell." The head of Pontormo is that of an old man looking upwards, and is situate at the foot of the picture, in the left-hand corner.

## MICHELE SAN MICHELE.

[BORN 1484—DIED 1559.]

MICHELE SAN MICHELE was born at Verona, in the year 1484. The youth acquired the first principles of architecture under the discipline of his father, Giovanni, and of Bartolommeo his uncle, two excellent architects; and in the sixteenth year of his age he repaired to Rome, leaving his father and two brothers, the latter both endowed with very fine parts; of this one of them, named Jacopo, gave proof in the study of letters; while the other, since called Don Camillo, became a Canon Regular, and was finally made General of his Order.

Arrived in Rome, Michele studied the antiquities of ancient architecture with the most careful and zealous devotion, measuring and examining all the buildings and other edifices minutely, insomuch that no long time had elapsed before he became known, and even of good repute, not in Rome only, but in all the districts lying around that capital.

No long time had elapsed, nevertheless, before the Signori of Venice secured San Michele to themselves, compelled him to abandon Rome, which he nevertheless would not do until he had received the full permission of the Pontiff, whose wishes he first fulfilled in every particular, and that done, he departed to enter the service of the above-mentioned most Illustrious Signori, who were his natural lords.

San Michele was a man of most orderly and upright life, highly honourable in all his actions; he was of a cheerful disposition, yet grave withal; a man who feared God, and was so rigidly attentive to his religious duties, that he would on no

account have commenced any work in the morning until he had first heard mass devoutly, and repeated his prayers. On the first beginning of any work of importance, moreover, he would invariably cause the Mass of the Spirito Santo, or that of the Madonna, to be solemnly sung before any other thing was attempted. He was of an exceedingly liberal disposition, and so obliging towards his friends, that they were as much masters of all he possessed as he was himself.

One proof of his integrity and generosity I will not omit to mention here, believing it to be known to very few besides myself. When Giorgio Vasari, with whom, as I have said, San Michele was on the most friendly terms, was last parting from him in Venice, the architect said to him, "I would have you to know, Messer Giorgio, that when I was at Monte Fiascone in my youth, I fell in love, as it pleased fortune, with the wife of a stone-cutter; and she was, of a truth, very kindly disposed towards me, but no one ever knew anything of that matter except myself. Now, I hear that this poor woman has been left a widow, with a daughter whom she desires to give in marriage, and who, as she declares, is mine own. This may very possibly not be true; nor do I think it is true; but however that may be, do you take her these fifty crowns of gold, and give them to her as bestowed on my part, for the love of God, and to the end that she may help herself and settle her daughter according to the condition of the mother." Giorgio was then going to Rome, and passed through Monte Fiascone, when, although the good woman freely confessed to him that the maiden was not Michele's daughter, yet, as the latter had commanded him, he paid her the money, which was as welcome to that poor creature as five hundred crowns might have been to some others.

San Michele was indeed more kindly and friendly than any man that ever lived, insomuch that he was scarcely made aware of the wants or desires of his friends before he would instantly set about labouring to fulfil the same, though it were to the spending of his life; nor did any one ever do him a service without having it many times and doubly repaid.

The Signori of Venice were many times on the point of



increasing the stipend of San Michele, but he always refused to accept these additions, desiring that they would give the sums which they proposed to add to his appointments, to his nephews rather than to himself. In a word, San Michele was most courteous, friendly, and benevolent in all his actions; he was esteemed and beloved accordingly by many great nobles, among others, and while our artist was in Rome, by the Cardinal de' Medici, who was afterwards Pope Clement VII., by the Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, subsequently Pope Paul III., by the divine Michelagnolo, by the Signor Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, and by vast numbers of the nobles and senators of Venice.

## GIOVAN-ANTONIO BAZZI, CALLED SODOMA.<sup>1</sup>

[BORN 1477—DIED 1549.]

GIOVAN-ANTONIO<sup>2</sup> was invited to Siena by certain merchants who were agents of the noble family of the Spannocchi, when, as his good fortune, or perhaps his evil destiny, would have it, he did not for a time find any competitors in that city. He therefore laboured there alone, and this, although it was for the moment a kind of advantage, became eventually injurious to him, since he thus suffered himself in a certain manner to fall asleep, and never gave himself the trouble to study, but executed the greater part of his works by mere facility of hand.

In the early days of his residence at Siena, Giovan-Antonio executed numerous portraits from the life, with that glowing manner of colouring of his which he had brought from Lombardy, and he then also made many friends in Siena, but more because the inhabitants of that city are much inclined to favour foreigners than on account of his merits as a painter. He was besides a man of joyous and free life, and ever ready to contribute to the amusement of others, even though it were not always in the most creditable manner. In this he had always around him boys and beardless youths whom he loved beyond measure, for which cause he acquired the nick-name of Sodoma; whereat,

<sup>1</sup> "We must bear in mind," remarks J. A. Symonds (*Italian Byways*, p. 37), "that for some unknown reason the Aretine historian bore a rancorous grudge against this Lombard, whose splendid gifts and great achievements he did all he could by writing to depreciate."

<sup>2</sup> He was born at Vercelli, in Lombardy, and was possibly a pupil of Leonardo da Vinci's.

instead of being displeased and resenting the same, he would laugh and glorify himself, making sonnets and canzonets upon it, which songs he would then sing to the lute, and that without reserve.

Giovan-Antonio had a fancy for keeping all sorts of strange animals in his house, badgers, squirrels, apes, cat-a-mountains, dwarf asses, horses and barbs to run races, magpies, dwarf chickens, tortoises, Indian doves, and other animals of similar kind, whatever he could get into his hands in short; and besides the animals above-named, he had a raven, which he had so effectually taught to speak, that this creature counterfeited the voice of Giovan-Antonio exactly in some things, more especially in replying to any one who knocked at the door, nay, this last he did so perfectly, that he seemed to be the painter's very self, as all the Sienese well know. The other animals also were so tame that they were constantly assembled about his person, while he was in the house, and came round all who approached him, playing the strangest tricks, and performing the most extraordinary concerts ever seen or heard, insomuch that the dwelling of this man seemed like the very ark of Noah.

This unusual manner of living, the strangeness of his proceedings, with his works and pictures, some of which were certainly very good ones, caused Giovan-Antonio to have such a name among the Sienese (with the base and low that is to say, for those of higher condition judged him better), that he was held by many to be a great man. Wherefore Fra Domenico da Leccio, a Lombard, being made General of the monks of Monte Oliveto, and Giovan-Antonio, going to visit him at Monte Oliveto di Chiusuri, the principal abode of that Order, distant about fifteen miles from Siena, found so much to say and used so many persuasions, that he received commission to finish the stories which had been partly executed on a wall of that monastery by Luca Signorelli of Cortona. The subject which had been chosen was from the life of San Benedetto, and Bazzi undertook the work for a very low price, with the addition of his expenses and that of certain boys, colour grinders and other assistants, by whom he was attended. But the amusement

which those fathers found in his proceedings while he worked in that place is not to be told, nor could one easily describe the pranks which he played there, insomuch that the monks then bestowed on him the name of *Mattaccio*, in requital of his follies.

Returning to the work itself, however, Giovan-Antonio, having finished certain stories in a manner which showed more readiness of hand than care and thought, the General complained of that circumstance, when Il Sodoma replied, that he worked according to his humour, and that his pencil only danced in harmony with the sound of the coins, adding, that if the General would pay more, he was quite able to produce much better work. Thereupon Fra Domenico promised to pay him better for the future, when Giovan-Antonio painted three stories which still remained to be executed in the angles, with so much more of thought and care than he had given to the others, that they proved to be much better works.

In the first of these pictures is seen San Benedetto departing from Norica, and leaving his parents to go and pursue his studies in Rome; in the second are San Mauro and San Placido brought to him as children, and dedicated by their parents to God; the third picture represents the Goths burning Monte Casino. Last of all, and to do despite to the General and those monks, Giovan-Antonio depicted the story of the Priest Fiorenzo, the enemy of San Benedetto, who brought a number of prostitutes to sing and dance around the monastery of that holy man, thereby to tempt and disturb the devotions of those fathers. In this story Il Sodoma, who was as eccentric in painting as in the other actions of his life, exhibited a dance of nude women, which was altogether offensive, and, as he knew that this would not be permitted, he refused to let any of the monks see his work while it was in progress. When this story was uncovered, the General at once commanded that it should be instantly destroyed and done away with, but Il Sodoma, after much idle talk, and seeing that the father was in great anger, added draperies to all the naked women in that picture, which is among the best to be found there.



While Giovan-Antonio was occupied with these paintings, a Milanese gentleman had gone to take the habit of a monk in that monastery; he was at the time wearing a yellow cloak, bordered and trimmed with black cords, as was the fashion of the period; and when the gentleman had taken the habit, this cloak was given by the General to Sodoma, when the latter, putting it on his back, drew his own portrait, thus clothed, with the aid of a mirror, in the picture wherein San Benedetto, when little more than a child, miraculously mends and makes whole the pail or tub of his nurse, which she had broken. At the feet of his own portrait Il Sodoma painted those of his raven, with a baboon, and some other of his animals.<sup>1</sup>

Il Sodoma had some very excellent parts, and was powerfully aided by nature; he might have become a very excellent painter; but he, whose thoughts were ever running on some absurdity, worked by fits and starts only, or when the fancy took him, caring for nothing more earnestly than the dressing himself pompously, wearing a doublet of brocade, a short cloak all covered over and decorated with cloth of gold, head-gear of the richest fashion, a gold chain and other fopperies of similar kind, best suited to Jack-puddings and mountebanks, in all which Agostino, for whom he painted one of the principal rooms in the palace in the Travestere, whom that humour of his diverted greatly, found the finest sport in the world.

Pope Julius II. having then died, and Leo X., whom all fantastic and light-minded creatures such as was this man pleased well; Leo X., I say, being created high Pontiff, Il Sodoma was suddenly raised to the very summit of delight, and

<sup>1</sup> In this picture the artist placed the portraits of his wife and daughter as well as his own. "He there appears as a young man with large and decidedly handsome features, a great shock of dark curled hair escaping from a yellow cap, and flowing down over a rich mantle which drapes his shoulders."—J. A. SYMONDS. In the very interesting portrait at the Uffizzi we see him in middle age; there is a somewhat romantic air over his thin melancholy face with its prominent cheek-bones and dark eyes and hair. Raphael painted his portrait beside himself in his School of Athens.

the rather as he detested Julius, who had done him that scorn; wherefore, desiring to make his talents known to the new Pontiff, he set himself to work, and executed a painting wherein he depicted a nude figure of Lucretia stabbing herself with the poniard. And as fortune is favourable to fools and will sometimes bring aid to thoughtless men, so Giovan-Antonio succeeded in producing the most beautiful form of a woman that can be conceived, with a head that was breathing.

The work thus happily completed, Agostino Chigi, who stood in the closest relations of service with Leo X., caused it to be presented to his Holiness, by whom the artist was made a Cavalier or Knight and duly remunerated for so beautiful a picture. It now appeared to Giovan-Antonio that he had become a great man, and he began to refuse all labour unless when he was driven to work by actual want.

Repairing subsequently to Florence, he was commissioned by a monk of the Brandolini family, who was then Abbot of the monastery of Monte Oliveto, which is situate outside the gate of San Friano, to paint certain pictures in fresco on the wall of the Refectory. While Bazzi was occupied with this painting, he sent a Barbary horse, which he had brought with him to Florence, to run at the race of San Bernaba; and, as fortune would have it, his horse ran much better than the others, and won the prize. But when the boys, who, according to the usual custom, followed the trumpeters after the race, to call out the name of the master to whom the winning horse belonged, came to Giovan-Antonio inquiring what name they were to call out, he replied Sodoma, and the boys so called out accordingly; when that disreputable name being heard by certain grave old men, they began to complain of it and to say: "What unbecoming thing is this, and what boldness is here, that there should be called through our city so opprobrious a name as this?" in such sort that a clamour arose, and the poor Sodoma was within an ace of being stoned by the boys and people, together with his horse and the ape which he had with him on the saddle. Giovan-Antonio had indeed won many races in the course of years (which had been gained by his horses as described above),

and displaying indescribable vain-glory in the matter of his accumulated prizes, he would exhibit them to every one who came into the house, nay, he would very frequently make a show of them at his windows.

Ultimately Giovan-Antonio perceived that the hearts of the Sienese were entirely turned to the excellence in art, and other admirable qualities of Domenico Beccafumi, and having neither house nor income at Siena, nay, having consumed almost all that he possessed, while he was then become old as well as poor, he departed from the city almost in despair, and betook himself to Volterra. There, as his good fortune would have it, he found Messer Lorenzo di Galeotto de' Medici, a rich and much respected gentleman, with whom he took shelter, in the hope of remaining with him for a very long time. Thus dwelling in the house of Messer Lorenzo, he painted a picture on cloth for that noble, the subject selected being the Chariot of the Sun, which, having been unskilfully guided by Phaeton, falls into the river Po. But it is perfectly easy to see that the artist worked for his amusement only, and that the painting was executed by mere facility of hand, no thought having been given to any part of it; so insignificant and ill-considered is the whole performance. Accustomed to a life of freedom, Giovan-Antonio became weary after a time of remaining in the house of Messer Lorenzo, and his abode in Volterra having also become distasteful to him, he departed thence, and proceeded to Pisa.

Having nothing to do at Pisa, he left that city, repairing to Luca, and in San Ponziano, a monastery belonging to the monks of Monte Oliveto, he received a commission from the abbot, who was a person of his acquaintance, to paint a picture of Our Lady on a staircase which forms the ascent to the dormitory. That work being completed, Giovan-Antonio returned to Siena, weary, old, and poor; but he did not long survive his arrival in that city: falling sick, and having no one to take care of him, nor any means wherewith to procure needful attendance, he took refuge in the great hospital, where he finished the course of his life in a very few weeks.

While Giovan-Antonio was still young and in good repute,

he had taken a wife in Siena, the young woman being the daughter of very honest and respectable parents. In the first year of his marriage he became the father of a little girl, but his wife, being weary of the follies committed by this man, at length refused to live with him. Withdrawing herself wholly from her husband therefore, she supported her child by her labour, and on the interest of her dowry.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> She was, however, with him in 1531 and 1541, and there were two children.



## JACONE.

THE works of Jacone<sup>1</sup> were not very numerous, he being one of those men who pass their time in gossiping and jesting, and contenting himself with what little Fortune and his idleness permitted him to obtain, which was indeed often less than his necessities demanded. As he had frequent intercourse with Andrea del Sarto, Jacone designed exceedingly well and with much boldness, he also showed considerable fancy and originality in the attitudes of his figures, turning and contorting the same in all directions, seeing that he sought to vary and make each one different from the others in all his compositions, and of a truth he frequently gave evidence of much power of design, being fully capable of imitating the good when he chose to do so.

The example which Jacone had given of his ability in this work gave rise to the expectation that he would in time accomplish great things; but as his head was ever running on amusements, and he continually employed his time in suppers and feastings of all kinds with his friends, instead of giving it to labour and study, he was constantly observed rather to degenerate than to make new acquirements. But a circumstance, which I scarcely know whether to deride or to compassionate, is to be related of Jacone: he belonged, that is to say, to a company or rather a horde of young men, who, under the pretext of living like philosophers, demeaned themselves rather like so many swine or other brute-beasts, never did they wash either hands or face, or head or beard; they did not sweep their houses, they never made their beds save twice in each month only, they used the cartoons of their pictures for

<sup>1</sup> His proper name was Jacopo di Givanni di Francesco.

their tables, and drank only from the bottle or the pitcher; this pitiable coarseness and contemptible folly all the while appearing to them to be the finest life in the world. But it is certain that external habitudes are not unfrequently the index of what may be found within, and indicate the mental characteristics of the man: I am well persuaded therefore, as I have remarked at other times, that these men were but little less impure and brutal in their minds and lives than they were in their outward appearance.

When Jacopo da Pontormo was painting, for the Duke Alessandro, that Loggia at the Villa of Careggi, whereof there has already been made mention in his life, Jacone assisted him in that work; the greater part of the grottesche and other decorations being by his hand; after this he occupied himself in various trifling matters of which it is not needful to speak further, the sum of the matter being that he spent the best time of his life in jesting, in buffoonery, in aimless musing, or in speaking evil, now of one person and now of another: art having just at that time fallen in Florence into the hands of a company of persons who thought more of amusing and enjoying themselves, than of the labour required for the success of their works; their principal delight being to get together in the wine-shops and other places, where, in their slang, they would decry the productions of other artists, who laboured steadily and passed their time as respectable and honoured citizens.

The chiefs of this party were Jacone, the goldsmith Piloto, and the wood-worker Tasso; but the worst of all was Jacone, seeing that among his other fine qualities he had that of maligning some one in the bitterest manner whenever he opened his mouth. Wherefore it could scarcely surprise any one, that from the proceedings of such a company there should in time arise much mischief and, as will hereafter be related, many contentions; in one of these Piloto was killed by a young man whom his offensive words had enraged against him, a most appropriate consequence of their disorderly habits.

The mode of life and proceedings of men thus constituted could not but render them unacceptable to persons of respect-

able condition; and they were in the frequent habit, I will not say all of them, but some at least, of lounging about under the walls, as do the wool-workers and other mechanics, playing at various games; or at other times they would haunt the taverns. One day, therefore, that Giorgio Vasari was returning from Monte Oliveto, a monastery outside of Florence, where he had been to visit the reverend and very excellent Don Miniato Pitti, who was then Abbot of that monastery, he found Jacone with the greater part of his band at the corner of the Medici, when that person, as I have since been told, hoped, with some of his useless remarks, uttered half in jest and half in earnest, to hit upon something whereby Vasari might be offended. When the latter, who was on horseback, entered the midst of the troop, therefore, Jacone cried out, "Well, Giorgio! how goes it with your worship?" "Very well, good Jacone," responded Giorgio, "seeing that I, who was once as poor as any one of you all, can now count my three thousand crowns or more. You have considered me a simpleton, but the monks and priests hold me to be something better; formerly I was serving among you, but now this servant whom you see serves me as well as my horse. I used to wear such clothes as we painters are glad to put on when we are poor, but now I am clothed in velvet. In old times I went on foot, now I ride on horseback; thus you see, my good Jaco, my worship does excellently well. God give you good day, Jacone." When the poor Jacone heard all this tirade poured forth in a breath, he lost all presence of mind, standing silent and confounded, as one whose own condition of misery is suddenly brought home to him, and who perceives that the man who intends to be the assailant sometimes falls at the feet of him whom he meant to assail.

Finally, being much reduced by sickness, while he was at the same time very poor, entirely destitute of aid, with none to nurse him, and unable to help himself from having lost the use of his limbs, Jacone died in great wretchedness, and with no better abode than a miserable cabin which he had in a little remote street or rather alley called Codarimessa. His death occurred in the year 1553.

## GIOVAN-FRANCESCO RUSTICI.

[BORN 1474—DIED 1554.]

IT is a remarkable fact, that almost all young men who studied their art in the Garden of the Medici, and were favoured by the Magnificent Lorenzo the Elder, became distinguished in their several vocations, a circumstance that cannot be attributed to any other cause than the extraordinary judgment of that most noble person, the true Mæcenas of all men of genius, and who, to the power of discriminating elevation of character and mind, added that of duly promoting and rewarding them.

It thus happened that as the Florentine citizen, Giovan-Francesco Rustici, acquitted himself very creditably in his youth, not only in design but in modelling in clay also, so by the Magnificent Lorenzo, who readily perceived his quickness of intellect and good parts, he was placed for the purposes of study with Andrea del Verrocchio, with whom, in like manner, had studied Leonardo da Vinci.

Now, the fine manner and admirable dispositions of Leonardo pleased Rustici greatly, and as it appeared to him that the expression of his heads and the movements of his figures were more graceful, as well as more animated, than those of any other whose works he had ever seen; so, when he had learned the art of casting in bronze, had obtained some acquaintance with the laws of perspective, and could work in marble, he attached himself to Leonardo da Vinci. This occurrence did not, however, take place until after Andrea Verrocchio had gone to Venice for the execution of the works which, as I have before related, were executed by his hand in that city.



Becoming thus fixed with Leonardo, and serving him with the most affectionate submission, Rustici was greatly beloved by that master, who found him to be upright, sincere, and liberal of mind, as well as diligent and patient in the labours of his art, insomuch that Leonardo would eventually do nothing, small or great, but that which seemed good in the eyes of Giovan-Francesco. Descending from a noble family, the youth had sufficient means wherewith he might have lived at his ease; he attached himself to the studies of art, therefore, more from the desire of honour, and out of love for the same, than from any wish for gain. Nor, to speak the truth of the matter, does it often happen that those artists who have not glory, and honour, but the making of profit, for their ultimate or even principal aim, become truly excellent, even though they may have been endowed with good powers and a fine genius.

Works of merit are indeed not to be accomplished but with long and mature consideration, and, taking this view of the matter, Giovan-Francesco, in his more advanced age, was wont to say that a man should first think, and then make his sketch; he should afterwards prepare his designs, and having done that, should leave them without casting an eye upon them for weeks and months; then, having selected the best, he may put them in execution. This is a method which cannot be adopted by every one, nor is it one common to those who work only for gain. Rustici would also remark that an artist ought not lightly to permit the examination of his works before they are finished, by all who may come about him; nor should he be ready frequently, or without consideration, to change and alter at the suggestion of others.

Giovan-Francesco acquired much valuable knowledge from Leonardo, and, among other things, the method of delineating horses, in which he delighted so greatly that he copied these animals in clay, in wax, in full relief, and in half relief; at a word, in every manner that one can possibly imagine. I have some drawings of horses by his hand in my book, which are admirably well designed, and bear ample testimony to the skill and ability of Giovan-Francesco; he was exceedingly ready

in the management of colours also, and produced pictures which are very good, although his principal vocation was sculpture.

The Medici family having returned to Florence, Rustici made himself known to the Cardinal Giovanni, by whom, as one who had been the *protégé* of his father Lorenzo, Giovan-Francesco was received with much kindness. But the fashions of a court were not to his liking; they were indeed entirely distasteful to his calm and upright nature, which had no tinge of ambition or self-seeking; he preferred to live a life apart, and after the manner of a philosopher, enjoying the repose and quiet of solitude; but he did not refuse occasional recreation, and frequented the society of such among his fellow-citizens as were known to him; he often met the friends of his art likewise, nor did he neglect to labour when he felt the disposition to do so and found an opportunity for exertion.

That which ought to have redounded to the honour of Giovan-Francesco was turned to his injury, seeing that, whereas he had merited a double degree of reverence, as a distinguished artist no less than a noble and citizen of eminent station, his having become a sculptor deprived him, with the ignorant and foolish, of that honour and respect which were due to his birth.

But what was more unjust than all has yet to be related: a certain work, which deserved full two thousand crowns, was estimated at five hundred only, and even that sum was never entirely paid to Giovan-Francesco; four hundred were all that he could ever obtain, nor did he receive that until it was extorted by the intervention of Giulio, Cardinal de' Medici. At the spectacle of so much baseness, Rustici withdrew almost in despair, and resolving never more to accept any commission from the Civic Magistrates, or indeed from any Company which might render him liable to have more than one person to deal with.

He now lived a very solitary life, and made his dwelling in the rooms of the Sapienza, which is near the Monastery of the Servite monks, where he employed himself with certain small works by way of amusing his leisure, and that he might not be

wholly idle. But he also wasted both time and money in attempting to freeze mercury.

Giovan-Francesco had a great love for the palace of Salviati at the Badia, and would sometimes stroll out of Florence in his long gown until he would get even to the Palace; having cleared the city, he would throw the gown over his shoulder, and, thus accoutred would pass slowly forward lost in thought, until he reached his favourite spot. One day among others, he was going along that road, when, feeling himself too warm, he concealed that long robe of his in a sloe-bush, and never thought of it again until he had been at the Palace two days. He then sent one of his servants to seek the gown, and seeing the man return after having found it, he exclaimed: "Ah, the world has got to be too good! it must be coming to its end, and can't last much longer!"

Giovan-Francesco was a man of exceeding kindness, and very charitable to the poor, insomuch that he would suffer none to depart unconsolated. His money was kept in a sort of basket, whether he had little or much, and from this he would give, according to his ability, to all who asked of him. Wherefore it chanced one day that a poor man, who very often went to beg assistance from Il Rustici, and saw him constantly going to that basket for the alms which he bestowed, said, whispering to himself and without expecting to be heard: "Ah! my God! if I had but what that basket contains, I should soon be out of my difficulties." Giovan-Francesco heard this, and having looked at him fixedly for a moment, he said, "Come hither, and I will content thee." He then emptied the basket into the skirt of the poor man's garment, and said, "Go, and may God grant his blessing." He then sent to Niccolò Buoni, who was his most intimate friend, for more money; indeed the whole of his affairs were arranged by this Niccolò, who received and kept account of his rents, and of the income which he received from the *Monte*, as well as of the produce of his farms. This Niccolò sold at the right season, and it was his custom to give Rustici what money he wanted every week; these sums Giovan-Francesco would throw into the drawer of his desk, which he



never locked, all who might want any for the necessities of the house taking therefrom without restraint, as they happened to require it.

There was never a more amusing or more fanciful person than Giovan-Francesco, nor could there well be a man who had more delight in animals. He had a hedgehog among others, which he had rendered so tame that it would lie under the table like a dog, but sometimes rolled itself against people's legs, after a fashion that made the owners glad to draw them back into their own keeping: he had an eagle also, with a raven, which had been taught to speak so plainly, that he was frequently taken by those who heard and did not see him, for a human being. Giovan-Francesco also gave his attention to necromancy; according to what I am told, he even caused his disciples and servants to suffer excessive terrors thereby, and was thus enabled to keep them in such perfect obedience, that he was thereby permitted to live without cares as regarded his domestics. He had a room constructed almost in the manner of a fishpond, and in this he kept numerous snakes and serpents of various kinds, which could not get out; and here he found the greatest amusement, more particularly in the summer, from standing to look at these creatures; observing their fierce gambols, and the strange contortions they made, with indescribable pleasure and interest.

In his rooms at the Sapienza, Giovan-Francesco Rustici was accustomed to assemble a company of gentlemen, who called themselves the Brotherhood or Society of the Paiuolo,<sup>1</sup> their numbers were limited to twelve, and these were Rustici himself, Andrea del Sarto, the painter Spillo, Domenico Puligo, the goldsmith Robetta, Aristotile da Sangallo, Francesco di Pellegrino, Niccolò Buoni, Domenico Baccelli, who played and sang most admirably, and the sculptor Solosmeo; Lorenzo' called Guazzetto, the painter, was also of the number, as was Roberto di Filippo Lippi, who was their steward. Each of these members was permitted to bring four of his friends to

<sup>1</sup> A cauldron or pot for boiling meat, etc.



their suppers and amusements of different kinds, but not more.

Now the order observed in these suppers was this (and I describe it the more willingly, because the custom of forming such companies is now almost wholly abandoned and laid down): every member was enjoined to contribute one dish to the repast, and in this dish it was always expected that he should display some new or ingenious invention; having brought his contribution, each member presented the same to the lord of the feast, who was always one of the members, and who, on receiving it, made it over at once to some one among them, whomsoever he pleased, receiving from him at the same time his own dish in return, which in like manner the lord then presented to another of the members, selecting at his good pleasure as before. When all were at table, each offered to the other of his dish, as was reasonable, thus every one had a portion of all, if it so pleased him; but he who, in his choice or invention, had stumbled upon that previously chosen by another, was chastised for his fault.

One evening, among others, that Giovan-Francesco was giving a supper to these his companions of the Paiuolo, he commanded that they should substitute for the table an immense Cauldron, made from a large vat, within which all the guests found ample space, while the dishes were arranged in such a manner that they also appeared, as did the guests, to be floating in the water of the cauldron; the viands thus presented in the centre of the cauldron were illuminated from above, from the handle of the pot that is to say, which had the form of a bow, and whence there proceeded so bright a light that all the company could clearly examine each other's faces thereby. When all were thus most commodiously seated within the cauldron, there was seen to rise from the centre of the same a tree with numerous branches, whereon were placed the first course of the meats composing the supper; and when that course was despatched the tree descended below, where were situated musicians sounding various instruments. Immediately afterwards the tree rose anew, presenting the second course;

and again in like manner the third, continuing thus through the whole supper, servants being meanwhile in constant attendance and serving to all the finest and most generous wines.

This invention of the Cauldron, which was admirably managed, and decorated with pictures and paintings on canvas, was much commended by the members of the society: the particular contribution of Rustici on that occasion was a boiler or stew-pan formed of pastry, and wherein Ulysses was seen to be plunging his father, for the purpose of making him young again; the two figures of Ulysses and Laertes being represented by two boiled capons, which were most dexterously made into the forms of men by adding the limbs and various parts required, each member being composed of things suitable and good to eat, and all affixed with due care to the bodies of the capons.

Andrea del Sarto presented on the same occasion a temple of eight sides, resembling the Baptistery of San Giovanni in form, but raised upon columns. The pavement of this temple was an enormous dish of jelly, divided into compartments of various colours to represent mosaic; the columns, which appeared to be of porphyry, were very large and thick sausages, the capitals of the columns were made of Parmesan cheese, the cornices were of sugar-work, while the tribune was formed out of sections of Marchpane. In the centre of the temple was a singing-desk, made of cold veal, the book was formed of Lasagna, the letters and musical notes being made of pepper-corns; the singers standing before the desk were roasted thrushes and other small birds placed upright, with their beaks wide open as in the act of chanting, they wore a sort of shirt resembling the tunic of the choristers, and this was made of a kind of net-work, contrived in the thinnest parts of a caul of hog's lard; behind them stood two very fat pigeons as *contra-bassi*, with six ortolans, which represented the *soprani*, or *trebles*.

The dish presented by Spillo was the figure of a Tinker made from a great goose, or other bird of similar sort; and this man, so contrived out of a goose, carried with him all the tools required for the mending of a cauldron in case of need. Domenico Puligo brought a roasted pig, but so treated as to

resemble a scullery-maid watching a brood of chickens, and having her distaff and spindle beside her; she being there for the purpose of washing the aforesaid cauldron. Robetta produced an anvil made out of a calf's head, with all the requirements of the same; this was to serve for the better maintenance in order of the cauldron, and was extremely well managed, as indeed were all the contributions (in a word, and that I may not have to enumerate each viand one by one) which were presented at that supper, as well as at the many other festivals given by the Company or Brotherhood of the Paiuolo, or Cauldron.

## MICHELAGNOLO BUONARROTI.

[BORN 1475—DIED 1564.]

IN the Casentino, in the year 1474, a son was born, under a fated and happy star, to the Signor Lodovico di Lionardo Buonarroti Simoni, who, as it is said, was descended from the most noble and most ancient family of the Counts of Canossa; the mother being also a noble as well as excellent lady. Lodovico was that year Podestà, or Mayor of Chiusi-e-Caprese, near the Sasso dalla Vernia, where St. Francis received the Stigmata, and which is in the diocese of Arezzo. The child was born on a Sunday, the 6th of March namely, at eight of the night, and the name he received was Michelagnolo, because, without further consideration, and inspired by some influence from above, the father thought he perceived something celestial and divine in him beyond what is usual with mortals, as was indeed afterwards inferred from the constellations of his nativity, Mercury and Venus exhibiting a friendly aspect, and being in the second house of Jupiter, which proved that his works of art, whether as conceived in the spirit or performed by hand, would be admirable and stupendous.

His office, or Podesteria, having come to an end, Lodovico returned to Florence, or rather to the Villa of Settignano, about three miles from that city, where he had a farm which he had inherited from his ancestors. The place is rich in stone, more especially in quarries of the *macigno*, which are constantly worked by stone-cutters and sculptors, for the most part natives of the place, and here Michelagnolo was given to the wife of a stone-cutter to be nursed. Wherefore, jesting with Vasari one day, Michelagnolo once said, "Giorgio, if I have anything good



in me, that comes from my birth in the subtle air of your country of Arezzo, and perhaps also from the fact that with the milk of my nurse, I sucked in the chisels and hammers wherewith I make my figures."

Lodovico had many children, and as he possessed but slender revenues, he placed his sons as they grew up with wool and silk weavers. When Michelagnolo had attained the proper age he was sent to the school of learning kept by Messer Francesco of Urbino ; but the genius of the boy disposing him to drawing, he employed his leisure secretly in that occupation, although reproached for it, and sometimes beaten by his father and other elders, they, perhaps, not perceiving his ability, and considering the pursuit he had adopted an inferior one and unworthy of their ancient family.

At this time Michelagnolo formed a friendship with Francesco Granacci, who, although also but a boy, had placed himself with Domenico Ghirlandajo to learn the art of painting ; and being fond of Michelagnolo, Granacci supplied him daily with the designs of Ghirlandajo, who was then reputed one of the best masters, not in Florence only but through all Italy. The desire of Michelagnolo for art thus increased from day to day, and Ludovico, finding it impossible to divert him from his drawings, determined to try if he could not derive benefit from this inclination, and being advised by certain friends, he decided on placing him with Domenico Ghirlandajo.

The ability as well as the person of Michelagnolo increased to such an extent, that Domenico was amazed thereat, since it appeared to him that Michelagnolo not only surpassed his other disciples, of whom he had a large number, but even equalled himself, who was the master. One day, for example, as one of Domenico's disciples had copied with the pen certain draped female figures by Ghirlandajo, Michelagnolo took that sheet, and with a broader pen he passed over one of those women with new lines drawn in the manner which they ought to have been in order to produce a perfect form. A wonderful thing it was then to see the difference of the two, and to observe the ability and judgment of one who, though so young, had yet so much

boldness as to correct the work of his master. This sheet I now keep as a relic, having obtained it from Granacci, to put it in my book of designs with other drawings by Michelagnolo. And in the year 1550, being in Rome, I showed it to Michelagnolo, who knew it at once and was rejoiced to see it again, but remarked out of his modesty, that he knew more when he was a boy than at that time when he had become old.

Now it chanced that when Domenico was painting the great Chapel of Santa Maria Novella, he one day went out, and Michelagnolo then set himself to draw the scaffolding, with some tressels, the various utensils of the art, and some of those young men who were then working there. Domenico having returned and seen the drawing of Michelagnolo, exclaimed, "This boy knows more than I do," standing in amaze at the originality and novelty of manner which the judgment imparted to him by Heaven had enabled a mere child to exhibit ; for the work was, in truth, rather such as might have fully satisfied the artist, had it been performed by the hand of an experienced master. But if it was possible to Michelagnolo to effect so much, that happened, because all the gifts of nature were in him enhanced and strengthened by study and exercise, wherefore he daily produced works of increased excellence, as began clearly to be made manifest in the copy which he made of a plate engraved by the German Martino, and which procured him a very great name. This engraving was one which had just then been brought to Florence, and represented St. Anthony tormented by devils. It is a copper-plate, and Michelagnolo copied it with a pen, in such a manner as had never before been seen. He painted it in colours also ; and, the better to imitate the strange forms of some among those devils, he bought fish which had scales somewhat resembling those on the demons ; in this painted copy also he displayed so much ability that his credit and reputation were greatly increased thereby. He likewise copied plates from the hands of many old masters, in such sort that the copies could not be distinguished from the originals, for Michelagnolo had tinged and given the former an appearance of age with smoke and other things, so that he had made them

look old, and when they were compared with the original, no difference could be perceived. All this he did, that he might give his own copies in the place of the old works which he desired to possess from the hand of their authors, admiring in them the excellence of art and seeking to surpass them, when engaged in the execution of his own works; by which he acquired a very great name.

Lorenzo the Magnificent retained at that time the Sculptor Bertoldo at his garden on the Piazza, not so much as Curator and Guardian of the many fine antiquities collected there at great cost, as because Lorenzo desired to form a good School of Painters and Sculptors; wherefore he wished that the students should have for their chief and guide the above-named Bertoldo, who had been a disciple of Donato. It is true that he was old and could not work, but he was an able and highly reputed artist, not only for the ability and diligence which he had shown in polishing the bronze pulpits of Donato his master, but also for the numerous casts in bronze of battle-pieces and other smaller works, which he had executed for himself, and in the treatment of which there was then no one in Florence who could surpass him. Having a true love for art, Lorenzo grieved that in his time there should be found no great and noble sculptors who could take rank with the many painters of high fame and merit then existing, and he resolved, as I have said, to form a School. To this end he requested Domenico Ghirlandajo to send to the garden any youth whom he might find disposed to the study of sculpture, when Lorenzo promised to provide for his progress, hoping thus to create, so to speak, such artists as should do honour to his city.

By Domenico, therefore, were presented to him among others, Michelagnolo and Francesco Granacci, as excellent for this purpose. They went to the garden accordingly, and found there Torrigiano, a youth of the Torrigiani family, who was executing in terra certain figures in full relief which Bertoldo had given him. Seeing this, and aroused to emulation, Michelagnolo began to attempt the same; when Lorenzo, perceiving his fine abilities, conceived great hope of his future success, and



he, much encouraged, took a piece of marble, after having been there but a few days, and set himself to copy the head of an old Faun from the antique. The nose of the original was much injured, the mouth was represented laughing, and this Michelagnolo, who had never before touched the chisel or marble, did in fact copy in such a manner, that the Magnifico was utterly amazed. Lorenzo, furthermore, perceived that the youth had departed to a certain extent from the original, having opened the mouth according to his own fancy, so that the tongue and all the teeth were in view; he then remarked in a jesting manner to the boy, "Thou shouldst have remembered that old folks never retain all their teeth, some of them are always wanting." Michelagnolo, who loved that Signor as much as he respected him, believed in his simplicity that Lorenzo had spoken in earnest, and no sooner saw his back turned than he broke out a tooth, filing the gum in such sort as to make it seem that the tooth had dropped out, he then waited impatiently the return of the Signor. When the latter saw what was done he was much amazed, and often laughed at the circumstance with his friends, to whom he related it as a marvel, resolving meanwhile to assist Michelagnolo and put him forward.

He sent for Lodovico, therefore, requesting the latter to entrust the youth to his care, and saying that he would treat him as a son of his own, to which Lodovico consented gladly; when Lorenzo gave orders that a room in his own house should be prepared for Michelagnolo, and caused him to eat at his own table with his sons and other persons of worth and quality. This was in the second year of Michelagnolo's engagement with Domenico, and when the youth was fifteen or sixteen years old; he remained in the house of Lorenzo the Magnificent four years, to the death of Lorenzo namely, which took place in 1492. During all this time Michelagnolo received from the Magnifico an allowance of five ducats per month, and was furthermore presented for his gratification with a violet-coloured mantle; his father, likewise, had an office in the Customs conferred on him. But indeed all the young men who studied in the garden received stipends of greater or less amount from



the liberality of that magnificent and most noble citizen, being constantly encouraged and rewarded by him while he lived.

Of this garden, adorned with valuable antiques and excellent pictures, collected there for study and pleasure, Michelagnolo had the keys, and proved himself more careful as well as more prompt in all his actions than any of the other young men who frequented the place, giving proof of boldness and animation in all that he did. He laboured at the pictures of Massaccio in the Carmine also for many months, copying them with so much judgment that the artists were amazed thereat; but envy now increased with his fame; respecting this we find it related that Torrigiano, having formed an intimacy with Michelagnolo, and becoming envious of his distinction in art, one day, when jeering our artist, struck him so violent a blow in the face that his nose was broken and crushed in a manner from which it could never be recovered, so that he was marked for life; whereupon Torrigiano was banished Florence, as I have before related.

On the death of Lorenzo, Michelagnolo returned to his father's house in great sorrow for his loss; here he bought a large piece of marble from which he made a Hercules, four braccia high, which was much admired, and after having remained for some years in the Strozzi Palace, was sent to France, in the year of the siege, by Giovan Battista della Palla. It is said that Piero de' Medici, the heir of Lorenzo, who had been long intimate with Michelagnolo, often sent for him when about to purchase cameos or other antiques; and that, one winter, when much snow fell in Florence, he caused Michelagnolo to make in his court a Statue of Snow, which was exceedingly beautiful. His father, seeing him thus honoured for his abilities, and beginning to perceive that he was esteemed by the great, now began to clothe him in a more stately manner than he had before done.

For the Church of Santa Spirito, in Florence, Michelagnolo made a Crucifix in wood, which is placed over the lunette of the High Altar. This he did to please the Prior, who had given

him a room wherein he dissected many dead bodies, and, zealously studying anatomy, began to give evidence of that perfection to which he afterwards brought his design.

During his abode in Rome, Michelagnolo made so much progress in art, that the elevation of thought he displayed, with the facility with which he executed works in the most difficult manner, was considered extraordinary, by persons practised in the examination of the same, as well as by those unaccustomed to such marvels, all other works appearing as nothing in comparison with those of Michelagnolo. These things caused the Cardinal Saint Denis, a Frenchman, called Rovano, to form the desire of leaving in that renowned city some memorial of himself by the hand of so famous an artist. He therefore commissioned Michelagnolo to execute a Pietà of marble in full relief; and this when finished, was placed in San Pietro, in the Chapel of Santa Maria della Febbre namely, at the Temple of Mars. To this work I think no sculptor, however distinguished an artist, could add a single grace, or improve it by whatever pains he might take, whether in elegance and delicacy, or force, and the careful perforation of the marble, nor could any surpass the art which Michelagnolo has here exhibited. The love and care which Michelagnolo had given to this group were such that he there left his name—a thing he never did again for any work—on the cincture which girdles the robe of Our Lady; for it happened one day that Michelagnolo, entering the place where it was erected, found a large assemblage of strangers from Lombardy there, who were praising it highly; one of these asking who had done it, was told “Our Hunchback of Milan;” hearing which, Michelagnolo remained silent, although surprised that his work should be attributed to another. But one night he repaired to Saint Peter’s with a light and his chisels, to engrave his name as I have said on the figure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Michelagnolo’s methods of work Vizeniso, who knew him, wrote: “I have seen Michael Angelo, although then sixty years old, and not in robust health, strike more chips from the hardest marble

About this time the Florentine citizen, Agnolo Doni, desired to have some production from the hand of Michelagnolo, who was his friend, and he being, as I have before said, a great lover of fine works in art, whether ancient or modern; wherefore Michelagnolo began a circular painting of Our Lady for him; she is kneeling, and presents the Divine Child, which she holds in her arms, to Joseph, who receives him to his bosom. When the picture was completed, Michelagnolo sent it, still uncovered, to Agnolo Doni's house, with a note demanding for it a payment of sixty ducats. But Agnolo, who was a frugal person, declared that a large sum to give for a picture, although he knew it was worth more, and told the messenger that forty ducats which he gave him was enough. Hearing this, Michelagnolo sent back his man to say that Agnolo must now send a hundred ducats or give the picture back; whereupon Doni, who was pleased with the work, at once offered the sixty first demanded. But Michelagnolo, offended by the want of confidence exhibited by Doni, now declared that if he desired to have the picture, he must pay a hundred and forty ducats for the same, thus compelling him to give more than double the sum first required.

The fame of Michelagnolo had now, by his Pietà, by the Colossal Statue in Florence, and by his Cartoon, become so much bruited abroad, that in 1503, when our artist was about twenty-nine years old, he was invited to Rome with great favour by Julius II., who had succeeded Alexander VI. on the papal throne. Here His Holiness, who had caused one hundred crowns to be paid to Michelagnolo by his agents for travelling expenses, commissioned him to prepare his Sepulchral Monu-

in a quarter of an hour, than would be carried off by three young stone-cutters in three or four times as long; a thing incredible to him who has not seen it. He would approach the marble with such impetuosity, not to say fury, that I often thought the whole work must be dashed to pieces; at one blow he would strike off morsels of three and four inches, yet with such exactitude was each stroke given, that a mere atom more would sometimes have spoiled the whole work."



ment, but he had been several months in Rome before he was directed to make any commencement.

Michelagnolo then set hand to his work with great spirit, repairing for that purpose, with two of his disciples, to Carrara, to superintend the excavation of the marbles, having first received one thousand crowns in Florence from Alamanno Salviati, on account of those works.

In those mountains, then, he spent eight months without receiving any additional stipend or supplies of any kind, amusing himself meanwhile by planning all manner of immense figures to be hewn in those rocks, in memorial of himself, as did certain of the ancients, invited thereto by the vast masses before him. Having finally selected all that he required, he loaded them on ships, which he despatched to Rome, where they filled the entire half of the Piazza, which is towards Santa Caterina, and the whole space between the church and the corridor leading to the Castello, where Michelagnolo had his studio, and where he prepared the Statues and all other things needful for the Tomb. And to the end that His Holiness might come conveniently to see the artist at work, there was a drawbridge constructed between the corridor and the studio, a circumstance which gave rise to so close an intimacy, that the favourable notice thus bestowed on Michelagnolo having awakened great envy among the artists of his own calling, occasioned him much vexation and even persecution.

Having at length made all his preparations, and approached the conclusion of the same, Michelagnolo erected one portion of the Tomb, the shorter sides namely, at San Pietro in Vincola. It is said that while he was employed on that operation, a certain part of the marbles arrived from Carrara, where they had been suffered to remain, and as it was necessary to pay those who had delivered them, our artist repaired to the Pope, as was his custom. But finding His Holiness engaged with important intelligence just received from Bologna, he returned home, and paid with his own money, expecting to receive the order for it from the Pontiff immediately. He went to the palace a few days after therefore, but was again desired to wait



and take patience, by a groom of the chambers, who affirmed that he was forbidden to admit him. A Bishop who stood near observed to the attendant that he was perhaps unacquainted with the person of the man whom he refused to admit; but the groom replied that he knew him only too well. "I, however," he added, "am here to do as my superiors command, and to obey the orders of the Pope." Displeased with this reply, the master departed, bidding the attendant tell His Holiness when next he should inquire for Michelagnolo, that he had gone elsewhere. He then returned to his dwelling, and ordering two of his servants to sell all his movables to the Jews, and then follow him to Florence, he took post-horses that same night, and left Rome.

Arrived at Poggibonsi, a town on the road to the first-named city, in the Florentine territory, and consequently in a place of safety, the master made a halt; five couriers followed him one after another with letters from the Pope, and orders to convey him back, but no entreaty and no threat of the disgrace that would await him in case of refusal, would induce him to return. He was, however, finally prevailed on to write in reply, when he declared that His Holiness must excuse his returning to his presence, which he was resolved not to do, seeing that he, Julius, had driven him forth like a worthless person, which was a mode of treatment that his faithful service had not merited; he added that the Holy Father might seek elsewhere for some one who should serve him better.

But the Gonfaloniere labouring to induce Michelagnolo to repair to the Pope instead, and the master still refusing, Soderini at length prevailed on him to do so by investing him with the character of Ambassador from the Florentine Republic, and recommending him also to the care of his brother, the Cardinal Soderini, whom he charged to introduce Michelagnolo to His Holiness; he then sent the artist to Bologna, in which city Pope Julius had already arrived from Rome.

But there are some who ascribe Michelagnolo's departure from Rome, and his disputes with the Pope, to the following

cause. The artist would never suffer any one to see his works while in progress, but he suspected that his people sometimes permitted strangers to inspect them in his absence, and one day when the Pope, having bribed Michelagnolo's assistants, was entering the Chapel of his uncle Pope Sixtus, which he was causing our artist to paint, as will be related hereafter, the latter, who had that day hidden himself, because suspicious of his young men as I have said, rushed upon him with a plank of the scaffolding, and not perceiving whom it was that he was turning out, drove His Holiness forth in a fury. Let it suffice, however, that for one cause or another Michelagnolo fell into discord with the Pope, and then, beginning to fear for his safety, departed from Rome.

Arrived at Bologna, his feet were scarcely out of the stirrups before he was conducted by the servants of the Pontiff to the presence of His Holiness, who was at the Palace of the Sixteen. He was accompanied by a Bishop, sent by Cardinal Soderini, who was himself too ill to fulfil that office. Having reached the presence, Michelagnolo knelt down before His Holiness, who looked askance at him with an angry countenance, and said, "Instead of coming to us, it appears that thou hast been waiting till we should come to thee," in allusion to the fact that Bologna is nearer to Florence than is Rome. But with a clear voice and hands courteously extended, Michelagnolo excused himself, having first entreated pardon, admitting that he had acted in anger, but adding that he could not endure to be thus ordered away; if he had been in error, His Holiness would doubtless be pleased to forgive him.

Now the Bishop who had presented Michelagnolo, thinking to aid his excuses, ventured to remark that such men as he were always ignorant, knowing and being worth nothing whatever, once out of their vocation; but this threw the Pope into such a rage that he fell upon the Bishop with a stick which he had in his hand, exclaiming, "'Tis thou that art the ignoramus, with the impertinencies thou art pouring forth, and which are such as we should ourselves not think of uttering;" he then caused the Bishop to be driven out by the usher in waiting, with blows

of his fist. This offender having departed, the Pope, his rage thus cooled upon the prelate, bestowed his benediction on Michelagnolo, who was detained in Bologna by numerous gifts and promises, His Holiness ultimately giving him the commission for a Statue in bronze, being a Portrait of that Pontiff himself five braccia high.

This Statue was placed in a niche over the gate of San Petronio, and it is said that while Michelagnolo was engaged therewith, he received a visit from the distinguished goldsmith and painter Francia, who had heard much of his fame and works, but had never seen any one of them. Measures were accordingly taken for obtaining permission, and Francia had leave to see the statue above-mentioned. He was much struck by the knowledge of art displayed, but on being asked what he thought, he replied that it was a fine casting and a beautiful material. Hearing which, Michelagnolo supposed that he was praising the bronze rather than the artist, and remarked to Francia: "I am as much obliged for it to Pope Julius, who gave it me, as you are to the shopkeepers, who supply you with your colours for painting;" he furthermore added angrily, in the presence of all the gentlemen standing near, that Francia was a dunce. It was on this occasion that Michelagnolo remarked to a son of Francia, who was a very beautiful youth: "The living figures made by thy father are handsomer than those that he paints."

The Pope having returned to Rome and Michelagnolo being still engaged with the Statue, Bramante, who was the friend and kinsman of Raffaello, and but little disposed to befriend Michelagnolo, availed himself of his absence to influence the mind of Julius, whom he saw to be much inclined to works of Sculpture, and hoping so to contrive that, on the return of Michelagnolo, His Holiness should no longer think of completing the Sepulchre, Bramante suggested that for a man to prepare his tomb during life was an evil augury and a kind of invitation to death. In a word, the Pontiff was persuaded to employ Michelagnolo on his return in the painting of that Chapel, which had been constructed in the Palace and at the



Vatican, in memory of his uncle, Pope Sixtus. Bramante and the other rivals of Michelagnolo thought they would thus detach him from his Sculpture, in which they saw that he was perfect, and throw him into despair, they being convinced that by compelling him to paint in fresco they would also bring him to exhibit works of less perfection (he having but little experience in that branch of art), and thus prove himself inferior to Raphael.

When Michelagnolo returned to Rome, therefore, he found Julius no longer disposed to have the Tomb finished, but desiring that Michelagnolo should paint the ceiling of the Chapel. This was a great and difficult labour, and our artist, aware of his own inexperience, did all he could to excuse himself from undertaking the work, proposing at the same time that it should be confided to Raphael. But the more he refused the more Pope Julius insisted; impetuous in all his desires, and stimulated by the competitors of Michelagnolo, more especially by Bramante, he was on the point of making a quarrel with our artist, when the latter, finding His Holiness determined, resolved to accept the task. The Pope then ordered Bramante to prepare the scaffolding, which the latter suspended by ropes, perforating the ceiling for that purpose. Seeing this, Michelagnolo inquired of the architect how the holes thus made were to be filled in when the painting should be completed; to which Bramante replied that they would think of that when the time came, and that it could not be done otherwise. But Michelagnolo, perceiving that the architect was either incapable or unfriendly towards himself, went at once to the Pope, whom he assured that such a scaffolding was not the proper one, adding that Bramante did not know how to construct it; and Julius, in the presence of Bramante, replied that Michelagnolo might construct it himself after his own fashion. The latter then erected his scaffolding on props in such a manner that the walls were not injured, and this method has since been pursued by Bramante and others, who were hereby taught the best way in which preparations for the execution of pictures on ceilings, and other works of the kind, could be made; the ropes used by



Bramante, and which Michelagnolo's construction had rendered needless, the latter gave to the poor carpenter by whom the scaffolding was rebuilt, and who sold them for a sum which enabled him to make up the dowry of his daughter.

The extent of the work now compelled Michelagnolo to seek assistance; he therefore sent for men to Florence, resolving to prove himself the conqueror of all who had preceded him, and to show modern artists how drawing and painting ought to be done. The circumstances of the case became a stimulus to his exertions, and impelled him forward, not for his own fame only, but for the welfare of Art also. He had finished the cartoons, but deferred commencing the frescoes until certain of the Florentine painters, who were his friends, should arrive in Rome, partly to decrease his labour by assisting in the execution of the work, but also in part to show him the processes of fresco-painting, wherein some of them were well experienced.

These masters having reached the city, the work was begun, and Michelagnolo caused them to paint a portion by way of specimen, but what they had done was far from approaching his expectations or fulfilling his purpose, and one morning he determined to destroy the whole of it. He then shut himself up in the chapel, and not only would he never again permit the building to be opened to them, but he likewise refused to see any one of them at his house. Finally therefore, and when the jest appeared to them to be carried too far, they returned, ashamed and mortified, to Florence. Michelagnolo then made arrangements for performing the whole work himself, sparing no care nor labour, in the hope of bringing the same to a satisfactory termination, nor would he ever permit himself to be seen, lest he should give occasion for a request to show the work; wherefore there daily arose, in the minds of all around him, a more and more earnest desire to behold it. Now Pope Julius always greatly enjoyed watching the progress of the works he had undertaken, and more than ever desired to inspect anything that was purposely concealed from him; thus it happened that he one day went to see the chapel, as I have related, when the refusal of Michelagnolo to admit him occa-

sioned that dispute which caused the master to leave Rome, as before described.

Michelagnolo afterwards told me the cause of this refusal, which was as follows: When he had completed about one-third of the painting, the prevalence of the north wind during the winter months had caused a sort of mould to appear on the pictures; and this happened from the fact that in Rome the plaster, made of travertine and puzzolana, does not dry rapidly, and while in a soft state is somewhat dark and very fluent, not to say watery; when the wall is covered with this mixture, therefore, it throws out an efflorescence arising from the humid saltiness which bursts forth; but this is in time evaporated and corrected by the air. Michelagnolo was, indeed, in despair at the sight of these spots, and refused to continue the work, declaring to the Pope that he could not succeed therein, but His Holiness sent Giuliano da Sangallo to look at it, and he, telling our artist whence these spots arose, encouraged him to proceed, by teaching him how they might be removed.

Julius, who justly valued the ability of Michelagnolo, commanded that he should continue the work, judging from what he saw of the first half, that our artist would be able to improve the second materially; and the master accordingly finished the whole, completing it to perfection in twenty months, without having even the help of a man to grind the colours. It is true that he sometimes complained of the manner in which the Pope hastened forward the work, seeing that he was thereby prevented from giving it the finish which he would have desired to bestow; His Holiness constantly inquiring when it would be completed. On one occasion, therefore, Michelagnolo replied, "It will be finished when I shall have done all that I believe required to satisfy Art." "And we command," rejoined the Pontiff, "that you satisfy our wish to have it done quickly;" adding finally, that if it were not at once completed, he would have him, Michelagnolo, thrown headlong from the scaffolding.

Hearing this, our artist, who feared the fury of the Pope, and with good cause, desisted instantly, without taking time to add

what was wanting, and took down the remainder of the scaffolding, to the great satisfaction of the whole city, on All Saints' Day, when Pope Julius went into that Chapel to sing mass; but Michelagnolo had much desired to retouch some portions of the work *a secco*, as had been done by the older masters who had painted the stories on the walls; he would also gladly have added a little ultramarine to some of the draperies, and gilded other parts, to the end that the whole might have a richer and more striking effect. The Pope, too, hearing that these things were still wanting, and finding that all who beheld the Chapel praised it highly, would now fain have had the additions made, but as Michelagnolo thought reconstructing the scaffold too long an affair, the pictures remained as they were, although the Pope, who often saw Michelagnolo, would sometimes say, "Let the Chapel be enriched with bright colours and gold; it looks poor." When Michelagnolo would reply familiarly, "Holy Father, the men of those days did not adorn themselves with gold; those who are painted here less than any, for they were none too rich; besides which, they were holy men, and must have despised riches and ornaments."

For this work Michelagnolo received from the Pope, in various payments, the sum of three thousand crowns, and of these he may have spent twenty-five in colours. He worked with great inconvenience to himself, having to labour with the face turned upwards, and injuring his eyes so much in the progress of the work, that he could neither read letters nor examine drawings for several months afterwards, except in the same attitude of looking upwards. I can myself bear full testimony to the effects of such work, having painted the ceilings of five large apartments in the Palace of Duke Cosimo; and if I had not made a seat with a support for the head, and occasionally laid down to my work, I should never have been able to finish them; as it was, I weakened my sight, and injured my head so much that I still feel the bad effects of that toil, and I wonder Michelagnolo endured it so well; but his zeal for his art increased daily, while the knowledge and improvement which he constantly perceived himself to make encouraged him to



such a degree that he grudged no labour, and was insensible to all fatigue.

Michelagnolo had now resolved, since he could not do otherwise, to enter the service of Pope Paul III., who commanded him to continue the paintings ordered by Pope Clement, without departing in any manner from the earlier plans and inventions, which had been laid before His Holiness; for the latter held the genius of Michelagnolo in great respect; nay, the love and admiration which he felt for him were such that he desired nothing more earnestly than to do him pleasure. Of this there was a proof in the fact that Pope Paul desired to have his own arms placed beneath the Statue of the Prophet Jonas, where those of Julius II. had previously been. But when the master, not wishing to do wrong to Julius and Clement, declined to execute them there, saying that it would not be well to do so, His Holiness yielded at once, that he might not give Michelagnolo pain, acknowledging at the same time the excellence of that man who followed the right and just alone, without flattery or undue respect of persons; a thing to which the great are but little accustomed.

Michelagnolo had brought three-fourths of the work to completion, when Pope Paul went to see it; and Messer Biagio da Cesena, the master of ceremonies, a very punctilious man, being in the Chapel with the Pontiff, was asked what he thought of the performance. To this he replied, that it was a very improper thing to paint so many nude forms, all showing their nakedness in that shameless fashion, in so highly honoured a place; adding that such pictures were better suited to a bathroom, or a road-side wine-shop, than to the chapel of a Pope. Displeased by these remarks, Michelagnolo resolved to be avenged; and Messer Biagio had no sooner departed than our artist drew his portrait from memory, without requiring a further sitting, and placed him in Hell under the figure of Minos, with a great serpent wound round his limbs, and standing in the midst of a troop of devils: nor did the entreaties of Messer Biagio to the Pope and Michelagnolo, that this portrait might be removed, suffice to prevail on the master to consent; it was



left as first depicted, a memorial of that event, and may still be seen.<sup>1</sup>

It chanced about this time that Michelagnolo fell from a no inconsiderable height of the scaffolding around this work and hurt his leg, yet in the pain and anger this caused him he would suffer no surgeon to approach his bed; wherefore the Florentine physician, Maestro Baccio Rontini, the friend of Michelagnolo, and a great admirer of his genius, who was a very eccentric person, taking compassion on his state, went one day to knock at the door of the house. Obtaining no reply, either from his neighbours or himself, he strove to make his way in by a secret entrance, and from room to room at length arrived at that wherein the master lay. He found him in a desperate state, but from that moment he would not leave his bed-side, and never lost sight of the patient until he had effectually cured the injured leg.

His malady overcome, and having returned to his work, the master laboured thereat continually for some months, when he brought it to an end, giving so much force to the figures of the same, that they verified the description of Dante,—“Dead are the dead, the living seem to live.” The sufferings of the condemned and the joys of the blessed are exhibited with equal truth; wherefore, this painting being given to view, Michelagnolo was found to have surpassed not only all the early masters who had painted in that chapel, but himself also, having resolved, as respected the ceiling which had rendered him so celebrated, to be his own conqueror; here, therefore, he had by very far exceeded that work, having imagined to himself all the terrors of the last day with the most vivid force of reality.

The attention of Michelagnolo was constantly directed towards the highest perfection of art, as I have said elsewhere; we are therefore not here to look for landscapes, trees, buildings,

<sup>1</sup> The Pope is said to have replied to Messer Biagio's complaints by the comforting assurance that, “If the painter had put thee into Purgatory, I would have done all I could for thee; but since he hath sent thee to Hell, it is useless for thee to come to me, since thence, as thou knowest, *nulla est redemptio*.”

or any other variety of attraction, for these he never regarded; perhaps because he would not abase his great genius to such matters. These were his last pictures, they were painted in his seventy-fifth year, and as he told me himself, at great cost of fatigue, seeing that painting, and more especially fresco, is not the work of those who have passed a certain age.

The active spirit of Michelagnolo could not endure to continue unoccupied; and not being able to paint any longer, he set himself to work on a piece of marble, whence he proposed to extract a Pietà, consisting of four figures larger than life; doing this for his amusement and pastime as he said, and because the use of the hammer kept him in health.

He made a model also, to prove the truth of his words, and this was of the form wherein we now see the work to have been conducted; it cost twenty-five crowns, and was finished in a fortnight; that of Sangallo having exceeded four thousand, and having occupied several years in the making. From this and other circumstances, it was indeed easy to see that the Church had become an object of traffic and a means of gain, rather than a building to be completed; being considered, by those who undertook the work, as a kind of bargain to be turned to the best account. Such a state of things could not fail to displease so upright a man as Michelagnolo; and, as the Pope had made him Superintendent against his will, he determined to be rid of them all. He therefore one day told them openly that he knew well they had done and were doing all they could, by means of their friends, to prevent him from entering on this office, but that if he were to undertake the charge, he would not suffer one of them to remain about the building. These words thus publicly spoken, were taken very ill, as may readily be supposed, and awakened so much hatred against Michelagnolo, that this, increasing daily as the whole arrangement of the work was seen to be changed both within and without, permitted Michelagnolo to have no peace, his adversaries constantly inventing new methods of tormenting him.

At length the Pontiff issued a *Motu-proprio*, by which he

appointed him Superintendent of the fabric, with full authority to do or undo, decrease, extend, or change as it should seem good to him, and furthermore commanding that the whole government of those who were employed should be in his hands. Thereupon Michelagnolo, seeing the confidence which the Pope placed in him, desired to prove himself worthy thereof, and had a clause inserted in the *Motu-proprio*, to the effect that he performed his office for the love of God, and would accept no reward, although the Ferry of the river at Parma, which had formerly been given to him by the Pope, had been lost to him by the death of the Duke Pier-Luigi, and he had received only a Chancery of Rimini, which brought him in but a small revenue, in its stead.

Meanwhile he pressed forward the works of San Pietro in various parts of the building, desiring to bring it to such a state that the arrangement thereof could no more be changed. About this time he was told that Pope Paul IV. bethought himself of having certain parts of the Paintings in the Chapel altered, His Holiness considering that the figures in the Last Judgment were shamefully nude. When Michelagnolo, therefore, received a message from the Pope to that effect, he replied: "Tell His Holiness that this is a mere trifle, and can be easily done; let him mend the world, paintings are easily mended."

The office of the Chancery at Rimini was now taken from our artist, but he would not speak of the matter to His Holiness, who knew nothing about it, his Cupbearer having withdrawn it from Michelagnolo, with the intention of paying him a hundred crowns per month instead, by way of stipend, for his services at San Pietro; but when the first month of that stipend was sent to the master's house, he refused to receive the money. In the same year there happened to Michelagnolo the death of Urbino, his servant, or rather his companion, for such he had become. This man had entered his master's service at Florence, in the year of the Siege, and after Antonio Mini, his disciple, had gone to France; he was a most zealous servant, and in the twenty-six years of his abode with his



master the latter had made him rich, and had loved him so much, that although so old, he had nursed him in his sickness, and slept at night in his clothes beside him, the better to watch for his comforts. When Urbino died, therefore, Vasari wrote to Michelagnolo to console him, and the master replied in these words :—

“MY DEAR MESSER GIORGIO,—I can but ill write at this time, yet to reply to your letter I will try to say something. You know that Urbino is dead, and herein have I received a great mercy from God, but to my heavy grief and infinite loss. The mercy is this, that whereas in his life he has kept me living, so in his death he has taught me to die, not only without regret, but with the desire to depart. I have had him twenty-six years, have ever found him singularly faithful, and now that I had made him rich, and hoped to have in him the staff and support of my old age, he has disappeared from my sight; nor have I now left any other hope than that of rejoining him in Paradise. But of this God has given me a foretaste, in the most blessed death that he has died; his own departure did not grieve him, as did the leaving me in this treacherous world, with so many troubles. Truly is the best part of my being gone with him, nor is anything now left me except an infinite sorrow. And herewith I bid you farewell.”

Under Paul IV., Michelagnolo was much employed in many parts of the fortifications of Rome; and for Salustio Peruzzi, to whom that Pontiff had entrusted the construction of the Great Gate of the Castello Sant' Angelo, now half ruined, as I have related elsewhere, he undertook to distribute the statues required for that work, as well as to see and correct the models of the sculptors. At this time the French army approached Rome, and Michelagnolo, believing that he might himself come to an evil end, together with the City, resolved to depart with Antonio Franzese, of Castel Durante, whom Urbino had left him at his death to serve him. He fled secretly from Rome accordingly, retiring into the mountains of Spoleto, where he visited several abodes of the Hermits. At that time Vasari wrote to him, send-



ing him a little work which the Florentine citizen, Carlo Lenzoni, had left at his death to Messer Cosimo Bartoli, who was to have it printed, and dedicated to Michelagnolo. It was just then finished, and Vasari, who despatched it to Michelagnolo, received the following in reply :—

“MESSER GIORGIO, MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have received Messer Cosimo's little book, and in this shall be an acknowledgment, which I beg you to present to him with my service.

“I have in these last days undertaken a visit in the Mountains of Spoleto, to the Hermits abiding there, at great cost of labour and money, but also to my great pleasure, insomuch that I have returned to Rome with but half my heart, for of a truth one finds no peace or quiet like that of those woods. More I have not to tell you. I rejoice that you are well and happy, and recommend myself to your friendly remembrance. This 18th day of Sept., 1556.”

Michelagnolo worked for his amusement almost every day at the group of four figures, of which I have before made mention; but he broke up the block at last, either because it was found to have numerous veins, was excessively hard, and often caused the chisel to strike fire, or because the judgment of this artist was so severe, that he could never content himself with anything that he did, a truth of which there is proof in the fact that few of his works, undertaken in manhood, were ever completed; those entirely finished having been the productions of his youth. Such for example were the Bacchus, the Pietà of the Madonna della Febbre, the Colossal Statue at Florence, and the Christ of the Minerva, which are finished to such perfection, that a single grain could not be taken from them without injury; while the Statues of the Dukes Giuliano and Lorenzo, with those of Night, Aaron, Moses, and the two figures belonging to the latter, altogether not amounting to eleven statues, have still remained incomplete. The same may be said of many others; indeed, Michelagnolo would often remark, that if he were compelled really to satisfy himself in the works to be produced, he should give little or nothing to

public view. And the reason of this is obvious, he had proceeded to such an extent of knowledge in art, that the very slightest error could not exist in any figure without his immediate discovery thereof; but having found such after the work had been given to view, he would never attempt to correct it, and would commence some other production, believing that the like failure would not happen again; this then was, as he often declared, the cause wherefore the number of pictures and statues finished by his hand was so small.

Now the architect, Piero Ligorio, had entered the service of Pope Paul IV., and, busying himself with the fabric of San Pietro, he disturbed Michelagnolo anew, going about declaring that the latter had fallen into second childhood. This offended our artist exceedingly, he would fain have then returned to Florence, and was much pressed to do so by Giorgio; but feeling that he had become old, for he had then attained his eighty-first year, he excused himself to Vasari, to whom, writing in his ordinary manner, he sent several spirited sonnets, setting forth that the end of his days was nearly come, that he must now be careful to direct his thoughts to suitable objects, that his letters must prove him to be at his eleventh hour, and that no thought arose in his mind which did not bear the impress of approaching death. He added in one of his letters, "God has willed that the burden of my life must be endured for some time longer. I know you will tell me that, being old, I am unwise to attempt the making of sonnets, but since they say I am in my dotage, I do but perform my proper office. I see well the love you bear me, and do you, on your part, know to a certainty that I would gladly rest my weak frame by the bones of my father, as you exhort me to; but if I departed hence I should cause great injury to the fabric of St. Peter, which would be a shame as well as heavy sin; yet when all is so far completed that nothing can be changed, I hope still to do as you desire, if indeed it be not sinful to disappoint a set of rogues who are expecting me daily to leave the world."

About a year before his death, Vasari secretly prevailed on Duke Cosimo to move the Pope, through Messer Averardo his

Ambassador, to the end that since Michelagnolo was now much debilitated, His Holiness should keep a careful eye on those by whom he was surrounded, and should cause him to be visited at his house, for the due preservation of his designs, cartoons, models, and other property, taking measures, in the event of any sudden accident, such as may well happen to the very old; and this, in order that whatever might belong to, or be needful for, the fabric of San Pietro, the Sacristy and Library of San Lorenzo, or the Façade of the last-named church, might not be taken away, as so frequently happens, nor were these precautions, which were all duly attended to, without a satisfactory result.

In the Lent of this year, Leonardo, the nephew of Michelagnolo, resolved to go to Rome, as though divining that his kinsman was now near the end of his life, and the promise of this visit was all the more welcome to the latter, as he was already suffering from a slow fever. He caused his physician, Messer Federigo Donato, to write to Leonardo, hastening his arrival; but his malady increased, notwithstanding the cares of those around him: still, retaining perfect self-possession, the master at length made his will in three words, saying he left his soul to God, his body to the earth, and his goods to his nearest relations. He recommended his attendants to bethink themselves, in the passage from this life, of the sufferings endured by Our Saviour Christ; and on the 17th of February, in the year 1563, and at 23 o'clock, according to the Florentine computation (in 1564 after that of Rome), he departed to a better life.

Michelagnolo found his chief pleasure in the labours of art; all that he attempted, however difficult, proving successful, because nature had imparted to him the most admirable genius, and his application to those excellent studies of design was unremitting. For the greater exactitude, he made numerous dissections of the human frame, examining the anatomy of each part, the articulations of the joints, the various muscles, the nerves, the veins, and all the different minutiae of the human form. Nor of this only, but of animals, and more particularly of horses, which he much delighted in, and kept for his pleasure, examining them so minutely in all their relations to art, that he



knew more of them than do many whose sole business is the care of those animals.

His powers of imagination were such that he was frequently compelled to abandon his purpose, because he could not express by the hand those grand and sublime ideas, which he had conceived in his mind, nay, he has spoiled and destroyed many works for this cause; and I know too that some short time before his death he burnt a large number of his designs, sketches, and cartoons, that none might see the labours he had endured, and the trials to which he had subjected his spirit, in his resolve not to fall short of perfection. I have myself secured some drawings by his hand, which were found in Florence and are now in my book of designs, and these, although they give evidence of his great genius, yet prove also that the hammer of Vulcan was necessary to bring Minerva from the head of Jupiter. He would make his figures of nine, ten, and even twelve heads long, for no other purpose than the research of a certain grace in putting the parts together which is not to be found in the natural form, and would say that the artist must have his measuring tools, not in the hand but in the eye, because the hands do but operate, it is the eye that judges; he pursued the same idea in architecture also.

None will marvel that Michelagnolo should be a lover of solitude, devoted as he was to Art, which demands the whole man, with all his thoughts, for herself. He who resigns his life to her may well disregard society, seeing that he is never alone nor without food for contemplation; and whoever shall attribute this love of solitude to caprice or eccentricity, does wrong; the man who would produce works of merit should be free from cares and anxieties, seeing that Art demands earnest consideration, loneliness and quietude; she cannot permit wandering of the mind. Our artist did nevertheless greatly prize the friendship of distinguished and learned men, he enjoyed the society of such at all convenient seasons, maintaining close intercourse with them. Had he found a disciple to his mind, he would have made studies of anatomy, and written a treatise on that subject, even in his old age, as he often said to me, desiring to do this



for the benefit of artists, who are frequently misled by want of knowledge in anatomy. But he distrusted his power of doing justice to his conceptions with the pen, having little practice in speaking, although in his letters he expressed his thoughts well and in few words. He delighted in the reading of our Italian poets, more especially of Dante, whom he honoured greatly and imitated in his thoughts as well as copied in his inventions. Like Petrarch also, he was fond of writing madrigals and making sonnets, many of which are very serious, and have since been made subjects of commentary. He delighted in the reading of scripture, like a good Christian as he was, and greatly honoured the writings of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, whom he had heard in the pulpit. He was an ardent admirer of beauty for the purposes of art ; and from the beautiful he knew how to select the most beautiful, a quality without which no master can produce perfection ; but he was not liable to the undue influence of beauty, as his whole life has proved. In all things Michelagnola was exceedingly moderate ; ever intent upon his work during the period of youth, he contented himself with a little bread and wine, and at a later period, until he had finished the Chapel namely, it was his habit to take but a frugal refreshment at the close of his day's work ; although rich, he lived like a poor man ; rarely did any friend or other person eat at his table, and he would accept no presents, considering that he would be bound to any one who offered him such : his temperance kept him in constant activity, and he slept very little, frequently rising in the night because he could not sleep, and resuming his labours with the chisel. For these occasions he had made himself a cap of pasteboard, in the centre of which he placed his candle, which thus gave him light without encumbering his hands.

He has told me that, in his youth, he frequently slept in his clothes ; being wearied with his labours, he had no mind to undress merely that he might have to dress again. Many have accused him of being avaricious, but they are mistaken ; he has proved himself the contrary, whether as regards his works in art or other possessions. Who is it then that shall tax this master with avarice, seeing that the gifts he thus made were of

things for which he might have obtained thousands of crowns; to say nothing of a fact which I well know, that he has made innumerable designs, and inspected buildings in great numbers, without ever gaining one scudo for the same? But to come to the money which he did gain: this was made, not by offices nor yet by trafficking or exchanges, but by the labour and thought of the master. I ask also, can he be called avaricious who assisted the poor as he did, who secretly paid the dowry of so many poor girls, and enriched those who served him? As witness Urbino, whom he rendered very rich; this man, having been long his disciple, had served him many years when Michelagnolo one day said to him, "When I die what wilt thou do?" "Serve some one else," replied Urbino. "Thou poor creature!" returned Michelagnolo, "I must save thee from that;" whereupon he gave him two thousand crowns at one time, a mode of proceeding befitting the Cæsars and high Princes of the world. To his nephew also, he has more than once given three and four thousand crowns at a time, and has finally left him ten thousand crowns, besides the property in Rome.

Michelagnolo had remarkable strength of memory, insomuch that, after having once seen a work of any other artist he would remember it so perfectly that, if it pleased him to make use of any portion thereof, he could do so in such a manner that none could perceive it. In his youth he was once supping with some painters his friends, when they amused themselves with trying who could best produce one of those figures without design and of intense ugliness, such as those who know nothing are wont to scratch on the walls. Here his memory came to his aid, he remembered precisely the sort of absurdity required, and which he had seen on a wall; this he reproduced as exactly as if he had had it before his eyes, surpassing all the painters around him: a very difficult thing for a man so accomplished in design, and so exclusively accustomed to the most elevated and finished works of mastery as was Michelagnolo.

He proved himself resentful, but with good reason, against those who had done him wrong, yet he never sought to avenge himself by any act of injury or violence; very orderly in all his

proceedings, modest in his deportment, prudent and reasonable in discourse, usually earnest and serious yet sometimes amusing, ingenious, and quick in reply ; many of his remarks have been remembered and well merit to be repeated here, but I will add only a few of these recollections. A friend once speaking to him of death, remarked that Michelagnolo's constant labours for art, leaving him no repose, must needs make him think of it with great regret. "By no means," replied Michelagnolo, "for if life be a pleasure, yet, since death also is sent by the hand of the same master, neither should that displease us."

When Michelagnolo heard that Sebastiano Veneziano was to paint a Monk in the Chapel of San Pietro a Montorio, he declared that this would spoil the work ; and being asked wherefore, replied, that "as the monks had spoiled the world, which was so large, it could not be surprising that they should spoil that chapel which was so small." A painter had executed a work with great labour, and spent much time over it, but acquired a good sum when it was finished ; being asked what he thought of the artist, Michelagnolo replied, "While he is labouring to become a rich man, he will always continue a poor painter." A friend of his who had taken orders, arrived in Rome, wearing the garb of a pilgrim, and meeting Michelagnolo, saluted him, but the latter pretended not to know him, compelling the monk to tell his name at length, when Michelagnolo, feigning surprise at his dress, remarked, "Oh, you really have a fine aspect ; if you were but as good within as you seem without, it would be well for your soul." The same monk had recommended a friend of his own to Michelagnolo, who had given him a statue to execute, and the monk then begged him to give something more ; this also our artist good-naturedly did, but it was now found that the pretended friend had made these requests only in the certainty that they would not be granted, and suffered his disappointment to be seen ; whereupon Michelagnolo declared that such gutter-minded men were his abhorrence ; and, continuing to take his metaphors from architecture, he added, "channels that have two mouths rarely act well."



Being asked his opinion of an artist who, having copied the most renowned antique marble statues and imitated the same, then boasted that he had surpassed the ancients, he made answer to this effect:—"He who walks on the traces of another is but little likely to get before him; and an artist who cannot do good of himself, is but poorly able to make good use of the works of others." A certain painter, I know not who, had produced a picture wherein there was an ox that was better than all besides, when, being asked why the artist had made that animal more life-like than the rest, Michelagnolo replied, "Every painter draws himself well." Passing one day by San Giovanni, in Florence, he was asked his opinion of the doors, and said, "They are so beautiful that they deserve to be used as the gates of Paradise."

A priest, who was his friend, said to him, "'Tis a pity that you have not married, that you might have left children to inherit the fruit of these honourable toils;" when Michelagnolo replied, "I have only too much of a wife in my art, and she has given me trouble enough; as to my children, they are the works that I shall leave; and if they are not worth much, they will at least live for some time. It would have gone ill with Lorenzo Ghiberti, if he had not made the gates of San Giovanni; for his children and grandchildren have sold or squandered all that he left; but the gates are still in their place."<sup>1</sup> Vasari was sent one

<sup>1</sup> He was, however, a devoted friend. He said of himself (Donato Gianotti's Dialogue): "You must know that I am of all men who were ever born, the most inclined to love persons. Whenever I behold some one who possesses any talent or displays any dexterity of mind, who can do or say something more appropriately than the rest of the world, I am compelled to fall in love with him; and then I give myself up to him so entirely that I am no longer my own property but wholly his." Condivi, Michelagnolo's friend and biographer, thus writes of his relationship with Vittoria Colonna: "He for his part loved her so that I remember him say that he regretted nothing except that when he went to visit her upon the moment of her passage from this life, he did not kiss her forehead or her face, as he did kiss her hand." And Michelagnolo wrote: "She felt the warmest affection for me, I not



night by Pope Julius III. to the house of Michelagnolo for a design, and the master was then working at the Pietà in marble which he afterwards broke; knowing by the knock who stood at the door, he descended with a lamp in his hand, and having ascertained what Vasari wanted, he sent Urbino for the drawing, and fell into conversation on other matters. Vasari meanwhile turned his eyes on a Leg of the Christ on which Michelagnolo was working and endeavouring to alter it; but to prevent Vasari from seeing this, he suffered the lamp to fall from his hand, and they remained in darkness. He then called to Urbino to bring a light, and stepping beyond the enclosure in which was the work, he remarked: "I am so old that death often pulls me by the cape, and bids me go with him; some day I shall fall myself, like this lamp, and the light of life will be extinguished."

With all this he took pleasure in the society of men like Menighella, a rude person and common-place painter of Valdarno, but a pleasant fellow; he came sometimes to see Michelagnolo, who made him a design of San Rocco and Sant' Antonio, which he had to paint for the country people; and this master, who would not work for kings without entreaty, often laid aside all other occupation to make designs of some simple matter for Menighella, "dressed after his own mind and fashion," as the latter would say. Among other things Menighella received from him the model of a Crucifix, which was most beautiful; he formed a mould from this also, whence Menighella made copies in various substances, and went about the country selling them. This man would sometimes make Michelagnolo laugh till he cried, more especially when he related the adventures he met with; as, for example, how a peasant, who had ordered the figure of San Francesco, made complaints that the painter had given him a grey dress, he desiring to have a finer colour, when Menighella put a pluvial

less for her. Death has robbed me of a great friend"—*un grande amico* in the masculine gender; and he wrote a madrigal in which he spoke of her as "a man within a woman."

of brocade on the back of the Saint, which gladdened the peasant to his heart. He favoured, in like manner, the stone-cutter Topolino, who imagined himself an excellent sculptor, although, in fact, a very poor creature. He passed much time at the quarries of Carrara, sending marbles to Michelagnolo, nor did he ever despatch a cargo without adding three or four little figures from his own hand, at the sight of which Michelagnolo would almost die of laughing.

But now, to bring the matter to a conclusion, I will only add that Michelagnolo had an excellent constitution, a spare form, and strong muscles. He was not robust as a child, and as a man he had two serious attacks of illness, but he was subject to no disease, and could endure much fatigue. In his old age he suffered from gravel and afterwards stone, but for these he was carefully treated by his friend and physician, Messer Realdo Colombo. He was of middle height, the shoulders broad, but in the rest of his body well-proportioned. In his latter years he constantly wore stockings of dog-skin for months together, and when these were removed, the skin of the leg sometimes came with them. Over his stockings he had boots of Cordovan leather, as a protection against the swelling of those limbs, to which he then became liable. His face was round, the brow square and ample, with seven straight lines in it; the temples projected much beyond the ears, which were somewhat large, and stood a little off from the cheeks; the nose was rather flattened, having been broken with a blow of the fist by Torrigiano; the eyes were rather small than large, of a dark colour, mingled with blue and yellowish points; the eyebrows had but few hairs; the lips were thin, the lower somewhat the larger, and slightly projecting; the chin well-formed, and in fair proportion to the rest of the face; the hair black, mingled with grey, as was the beard, which was divided in the middle, and neither very thick nor very long.

## JACOPO SANSOVINO.

[BORN 1486—DIED 1570.]

HE was the son of an Antonio,<sup>1</sup> a very estimable person, and of Francesca his wife, who gave birth to the child in the month of January, 1477. In his first years the boy was sent, as is usual, to acquire the rudiments of learning, wherein he displayed much intelligence: he soon began to study drawing of himself, and gave evidence, in a certain sort, that Nature had disposed him to the study of design rather than that of letters, since he went very reluctantly to school, and was most unwilling to undertake the difficult acquirement of grammar.

His mother, whom he strongly resembled, perceiving this, and desiring to aid his genius, caused him to be secretly taught drawing, with the intention of making him a sculptor, perhaps in emulation of the rising glory of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, then very young. She may, perhaps, have also thought it a favourable augury that the latter and her son Jacopo were both born in the same street, the Via Santa Maria namely, which is near the Via Ghibellina. But the boy was meanwhile on the point of being devoted to trade, which he liked even less than grammar, and he opposed himself in such sort to this purpose, that his father ultimately permitted him to follow his own inclination.

At that time there had come to Florence, the sculptor, Andrea Contucci, of Monte Sansovino, a place near Arezzo, much talked of in our days as the birthplace of Pope Julius III. Having acquired a great name in Spain as well as in Italy,

<sup>1</sup> He was a mattress-maker at Florence.

Contucci was the best sculptor and architect, after Michelagnolo, then known to our Art: he was then occupied with the execution of two figures in marble; and with him Jacopo was placed that he might study the art of the sculptor. Andrea soon perceived that the young man promised to become very eminent, and neglected no precaution calculated to render him worthy of being known as his disciple; he became much attached to him moreover, and being as much loved by Jacopo in return, Contucci taught the youth with much affection, and it was thus soon believed that the disciple would ultimately equal his master, nay perhaps surpass him. The attachment of these two was indeed of such a character that being almost like father and son, Jacopo was no longer called De' Tatti, but Sansovino, and as he was then named, so is he now and ever will be called.

When Jacopo began to exercise his art he was so powerfully aided by Nature, that although he was not particularly studious, nor very diligent in his work, yet in whatever he did there was a grace and facility, with a certain ease, which was very pleasing to the eyes of the artists, seeing that every draught, sketch, or outline of his, displayed a boldness and animation which it has been given to but few among sculptors to possess. The intercourse and friendship subsisting in their childhood between Jacopo and Andrea del Sarto was also very useful to them both; pursuing the same manner in design, they exhibited a similar grace in execution, the one in painting, the other in sculpture; and as they frequently conferred together on the difficulties of Art, Jacopo meanwhile making models for Andrea, they assisted each other greatly.

His works caused Sansovino to be considered a most excellent and graceful artist by all Florence, and by every one connected with art; wherefore Giovanni Bartolini, having built a house in the Gualfonda, requested him to execute a Bacchus in marble, represented by a youth the size of life; when, the model being made by Sansovino, was found to be entirely satisfactory, and Giovanni having supplied him with the marble, he set to work with a good will, that gave wings both to his



thoughts and hands. But the figure was not hastily done; on the contrary, he studied it with the most intense care, and to promote the perfection of the form, he set himself to copy the figure of a certain disciple of his, called Pippo del Fabbro,<sup>1</sup> whom he kept standing naked the greater part of the day.

Having completed this statue, it was adjudged to be the best ever executed by a modern master, Sansovino having overcome a difficulty no longer attempted; one arm of the figure being fully detached and raised in the air, while a Tazza, cut from the same piece of marble, is held aloft in the hand, or rather, so delicate and subtle is the work, by the fingers, whereon it is so lightly poised, that they scarcely appear to touch it.

Now in those days the Germans, Spaniards, and French had each built churches for themselves in Rome, wherein they were now performing the offices, when the Florentines, favoured by Leo X., requested permission also to erect a church. Orders being given by the Pope accordingly to Ludovico Capponi, who was Consul of the Florentines, it was resolved that a large Church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, should be constructed behind the Banchi, at the commencement of the Strada Julia on the shore of the Tiber; and this, whether for size, magnificence, cost, or beauty of design, was to surpass all the others. For this work Raffaello da Urbino, Antonio da Sangallo, Baldassare da Siena, and Sansovino prepared designs in competition; and the Pope having seen all, declared that of Jacopo the best.

All Rome was indeed then being in his hands, and works of the utmost importance came pouring in upon him from all sides: his merits had been acknowledged by three Pontiffs, Pope Leo in particular having given him a Knighthood of St. Peter, which

<sup>1</sup> "The Blacksmith's Joe," that is to say. Vasari, in his first edition, remarks that he would have become an able artist, but that this long remaining unclothed during cold weather, or the severity of his studies, destroyed his health, and disturbed his mind; he was perpetually placing himself in the attitude of the Bacchus, or other statues, in which he would stand for hours together, silent and immovable, as if he were in fact a statue. In this condition he remained, with few intervals, until his early death.

he, fearing he should die in a sickness caused by a fall, had sold. But it now pleased God to punish that city, and abase the pride of the Romans ; wherefore it was permitted, that on the 6th of May, 1527, Bourbon should come with his army, and all Rome should be sacked and given up to fire and sword.

This ruin, amidst which so many men of genius came to an evil end, compelled Sansovino, to his infinite loss, to depart from the city, and he took refuge in Venice, whence he proposed to repair to France, where he had been invited to enter the service of the King. But halting in Venice, to provide himself with necessaries, having been despoiled of all, the Doge Andrea Gritti, a true friend of distinguished men, was told that he was there and desired to see him ; the rather as Cardinal Grimani had given him to understand that Sansovino would be just the person they wanted to restore the Cupolas of San Marco, which is the principal Church of the Venetians, seeing that, having become very old, and being, moreover, weak in the basements, and not well put together, they were cleft in many parts, and threatened with absolute ruin. The Doge therefore caused our artist to be called, and receiving him very favourably, after many conversations, he gave him to know that he wished, or rather entreated, him to find a remedy for this misfortune, which Sansovino promised to do. Commencing the work accordingly, he raised scaffoldings within the Cupola, and, after much toil contrived to secure the whole structure, by means of massive beams, well and firmly chained together by strong iron bands ; he then added curtains of woodwork to the whole fabric, within and without, which done, he raised new walls, refounding the piers by which the mass was supported, and so fortifying the entire building that its stability was assured for ever. All Venice stood amazed at his success, and the Doge was perfectly satisfied ; nay, what was more to the purpose, that most illustrious Senate, convinced of his ability, appointed Jacopo Protomaster of the Signori Procuratori of San Marco (the highest office conferred by the Signoria on its architects and engineers), assigning to him the house of his predecessor, who had just died, with a suitable stipend.

Having entered on his office, Sansovino began to fulfil the duties thereof with diligence; those connected with the books and accounts of expenditure, as well as with the building, giving his most earnest care to the details of that employment, which are very numerous, and displaying the most courteous consideration for the Senators. And not only did he devote himself zealously to whatever could promote the grandeur, beauty, and ornament of the Church, the Piazza, and the whole city, to an extent never before done by any man who had held his office; but by the ingenuity of his inventions, the promptitude of his actions, and the prudence of his administration, he lessened the outlay and improved the revenue, so that the Signoria was burdened with little if any expense.

Jacopo Sansovino, as to his person, was of the middle height, but rather slender than otherwise, and his carriage was remarkably upright; he was fair, with a red beard, and in his youth was of a goodly presence, wherefore he did not fail to be loved, and that by dames of no small importance. In his age he had an exceedingly venerable appearance; with his beautiful white beard, he still retained the carriage of his youth: he was strong and healthy even to his ninety-third year, and could see the smallest object, at whatever distance, without glasses, even then. When writing, he sat with his head up, not supporting himself in any manner, as it is usual for men to do. He liked to be handsomely dressed, and was singularly nice in his person. The society of ladies was acceptable to Sansovino, even to the extremity of age, and he always enjoyed conversing with or of them. He had not been particularly healthy in his youth, yet in his old age he suffered from no malady whatever, insomuch that, for a period of fifty years, he would never consult any physician even when he did feel himself indisposed. Nay, when he was once attacked by apoplexy, and that for the fourth time, in his eighty-fourth year too, he would still have nothing to do with physic, but cured himself by keeping in bed for two months, in a dark and well-warmed chamber. His digestion was so good that he could eat all things without distinction: during the summer he lived almost entirely on fruits, and in the very



extremity of his age would frequently eat three cucumbers and half a lemon at one time.

With respect to the qualities of his mind, Sansovino was very prudent; he foresaw readily the coming events, and sagaciously compared the present with the past. Attentive to his duties, he shunned no labour in the fulfilment of the same, and never neglected his business for his pleasure. He spoke well and largely on such subjects as he understood, giving appropriate illustrations of his thoughts with infinite grace of manner. This rendered him acceptable to high and low alike, as well as to his own friends. In his greatest age his memory continued excellent; he remembered all the events of his childhood, and could minutely refer to the sack of Rome and all the other occurrences, fortunate or otherwise, of his youth and early manhood. He was very courageous, and delighted from his boyhood in contending with those who were greater than himself, affirming that he who struggles with the great may become greater, but he who disputes with the little must become less. He esteemed honour above all else in the world, and was so upright a man of his word, that no temptation could induce him to break it, of which he gave frequent proof to his lords, who, for that as well as other qualities, considered him rather as a father or brother than as their agent or steward, honouring in him an excellence that was no pretence, but his true nature.

Sansovino was liberal to all, and so effectually devoted to his kin that he deprived himself of many enjoyments the better to aid them; yet he always lived honourably and with good credit, as a man looked up to by all. He sometimes permitted himself to be overcome by anger, which in him was an exceedingly violent passion, but one that soon passed over, and a few gentle words often sufficed to bring tears into his eyes. His love for his art was immense; nay, that the knowledge of sculpture might be the more widely diffused, Sansovino brought up numerous disciples, establishing what might almost be called a Seminary of that art in Italy.

This master was exceedingly desirous of glory, and, to the end that his memory might survive him, he spent much of his pro-



perty for others, greatly injuring his descendants thereby. The judges of Art affirm that, although yielding on the whole to Michelagnolo, yet Sansovino was the superior of that artist in certain points. In his draperies, his children, and the expression which he gave to his women, for example, Jacopo never had an equal. The draperies by his hand are, indeed, most delicately beautiful; finely folded, they preserve to perfection the distinction between the nude and draped portions of the form. His children are soft flexible figures with none of the muscular development proper only to adults; the little round legs and arms are truly of flesh, and in nowise different from those of Nature herself. The faces of his women are sweet and lovely; so graceful withal, that none can be more so, as may be seen in certain figures of the Madonna, in those of Venus, and in others by his hand.

This master, so renowned in Sculpture and so great in Architecture, had lived by the grace of God, who had endowed him with that ability which rendered him illustrious to the degree that we have described, up to the age of ninety-three years; when, feeling himself somewhat weary of body, he lay down in his bed to repose himself. He felt no kind of illness, and frequently proposed to rise and dress himself, as being in perfect health, but remaining thus for about six weeks he felt himself becoming weaker, and requested to have the Sacraments of the Church administered to him; this having been done, although he still expected to live some years, Sansovino departed on the 2nd of November, 1570, and, notwithstanding that the years of his life had come to their end in the pure course of Nature, yet all Venice lamented his loss.



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